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The Shape of Things

TENSION HAS RISEN AMONG THE WESTERN European neutrals in the past few days. Over the week-end Holland and Belgium received news which led them immediately to recall all troops on leave and to reinstate the frontier precautions adopted in November, when, there is good reason to believe, a German plan to invade the Low Countries was abandoned at the last moment. This time the alarm seems particularly acute in Belgium, where the evacuation of civilians from border districts has begun. The exact nature of the information which has prompted these steps is unknown, although there are unconfirmed reports of new German concentrations in the northern Rhineland. In any case, they seem to be taken seriously by the Allies. One theory held in Paris, however, is that German movements apparently threatening to Belgium and Holland are intended to cover an extension of the war to a new theater. The Balkans have been mentioned in this connection, but the increasingly strained relations between Russia and the Scandinavian states suggest the possibility of a joint Nazi-Soviet move in the North. Moscow has sharply rejected as "unsatisfactory" the replies of Norway and Sweden to its notes protesting against the assistance these countries are rendering to Finland. There is evidence, it declares, that their governments "do not offer resistance to the influence of those powers which strive to involve Sweden and Norway in war against the Soviet Union." Taken in conjunction with the bitter German press attacks on Scandinavia, this warning carries a sinister connotation for the Northern neutrals.

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THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AFTER A LONG period of acute taciturnity has published an extended communiqué mainly devoted to assailing "the slanderous fabrications" of the foreign press. Regarding the activities of the Red Army in Finland, it asserts that operations during the past three weeks have been limited to ordinary clashes of reconnoitering detachments. It denies that the Finns have anywhere crossed the Russian frontier and scornfully denounces reports of the crushing defeat of the Forty-fourth Division at Suomussalmi. There is no doubt that the American press has been guilty of more than a little exaggeration in its presentation of Finnish news. Editorial blue pencils might well have been exercised more freely on many cables, particularly on those relaying reports from cities outside Finland. Nevertheless, it seems certain that our daily press has accurately reported the main events of the war. In particular the news of the destruction of the Forty-fourth Division has been confirmed by experienced and responsible American correspondents actually on the spot. For the fact that the war has been reported almost exclusively from the Finnish angle, the Russian government is itself largely to blame. Its official statements have been singularly uninformative; it has developed a censorship system apparently designed to prevent foreign correspondents from sending fresh news; and it has kept foreign newsmen not only away from the front but apparently even from Leningrad. Soviet apologists in this country are making a great to-do about the way the bombing of Finnish cities is being handled in the press. Here again there has no doubt been exaggeration. The actual number of casualties has been relatively small, and there is no clear evidence of deliberate bombing of civilians. But what sort of excuse is this for the real crime, for the damning fact that Finland is being invaded at all?

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ITALY CONTINUES TO STRIVE WITH THE hydra-headed Balkan problem, seeking to build up a bloc under its influence which will compensate for its present military and diplomatic weakness. There are, however, so many conflicting interests to harmonize that the job would tax the genius of a Talleyrand, and Count Ciano hardly comes up to that standard. Last week we mentioned editorially a report from Budapest of an Italian guaranty to Hungary of military support against either Russian or German aggression. This story has not been confirmed, and according to a cable by Pertinax in the New York *Times* it clearly exaggerated the scope of the present negotiations between Italy and Hungary. The same authority states that Mussolini has obtained an assurance from Germany that it does not intend to disturb the status quo in Southeastern Europe, but this promise might easily be broken if Stalin decided on a move against Rumania. For Hitler would be in no position to oppose such a move openly and would either have to give his Moscow friend carte blanche or join his adventure on profit-sharing terms. Meanwhile Italy's primary effort is

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to find a basis for cooperative action between Hungary and Rumania. Both these states fear their Russian neighbor, but Transylvania seems too great a barrier between them to be breached by common funk. Italy's plan is to persuade Rumania to agree to a territorial adjustment after the war which would return to Hungary those parts of Transylvania in which the Hungarian proportion of the population is greatest. But neither King Carol nor the Hungarians dare lessen their intransigence on border questions in view of the menace of their own Nazis.

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LITTLE CHANGE IN JAPANESE FOREIGN OR domestic policy may be expected from the new government under Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai. In solving the Cabinet crisis caused by the resignation of General Abe, the Japanese elder statesmen fell back on what has by now become an almost monotonous formula. Like Abe, Hayashi, Okada, and several other recent Premiers, Admiral Yonai is a non-party man, and a moderate who is respected chiefly for his service record. He has served as navy minister in three recent Cabinets but has no direct connections with the military extremists. Abe's downfall was due chiefly to discontent over economic hardships resulting from three and a half years of war. Criticism centered particularly on the recent sharp increase in the official price of rice, made after the farmers had disposed of their crops. In view of the continuing military pressure for an intensification of the China campaign, it is difficult to see how Yonai can succeed where Abe has failed in the domestic sphere. Abroad he may be expected to be somewhat more vigorous in pressing for agreements with the United States and Great Britain. But with the military holding the reins in China, it is doubtful whether he can go beyond his predecessor in offering effective concessions. According to all indications, the China policy will be unchanged. Plans still call for the establishment of a unified puppet government under Wang Ching-wei at the first suitable opportunity. But there is no evidence that the basic conflicts between the various Japanese military factions in China which have impeded its establishment have yet been settled.

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OPPONENTS OF THE HULL TRADE PROGRAM would do well to study carefully the Argentine communiqué setting forth the reasons for the breakdown of negotiations for a reciprocal trade pact between Argentina and the United States. Argentina, it appears, was prepared to offer favorable quota arrangements and tariff concessions which would result in a decline of 7,000,000 pesos in governmental revenues in return for equivalent concessions from the United States. Such concessions, the Argentine government declares, were never offered. This statement completely refutes the assertion, frequently made by opponents of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, that the State Department has exhibited a flagrant disregard for the interests of American producers. Actually the shoe seems to be on the other foot. Solicitude for American farm producers has wrecked a pact which would have been of great importance to American exporters, as well as of utmost political significance. That the State Department's zeal in this case was not exceptional may be seen in the fact that our exports to the countries with which we have trade agreements have increased nearly twice as much as our imports from the same countries. Instead of correcting the serious maladjustment in our balance of payments, the trade agreements seem to be accentuating the export surplus. Responsibility for this anomalous situation rests primarily on the political groups which are constantly sniping at the Hull program.

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A FLEET BIG ENOUGH TO PROTECT HAWAII, the Panama Canal, and Atlantic coastwise shipping against the combined forces of Germany, Italy, Japan, and Soviet Russia was set forth by Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, as the objective of the Vinson bill now in hearings. Even with the 25 per cent increase envisioned in the bill, the fleet would still be inadequate for the protection of the Philippines and Latin America, the Admiral asserted. Thus we have for the first time a clear-cut statement of the navy's defense policy. It is a far cry from the parity principle which has hitherto governed naval construction. For a paltry $1,300,000,000, or slightly more than the amount asked for unemployment relief, the North American continent is to be made safe from the four powers with which we have the least friendly relations. It might seem to be a bargain if Mr. Vinson would only tell us what the other powers are likely to be doing while this huge navy is being constructed. The Japanese have already implied that they expect to match us ton for ton. Soviet Russia cannot very well afford to let Japan gain such an advantage; so it may attempt to match Japan's program. The result may be that at the end of the building period our inferiority to the combined forces of the four powers will be greater than at present. It may be taken as axiomatic that no country wants to divert a huge share of its resources to the building of unproductive battleships. The United States with its unparalleled natural defenses should be the last country to take responsibility for plunging the world into a naval race of such gigantic proportions.

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AFTER TOTTERING FOR YEARS IN A STATE OF constructive insolvency, the Associated Gas and Electric Company has crashed into the bankruptcy court. It applied for a receiver after the SEC forbade its chief subsidiary, the Associated Gas and Electric Corporation, to pay unearned interest and dividends on its 5 per cent note

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or its capital stock. Both these securities are held by the parent company, which in turn became unable to meet interest due on its publicly held debentures. Unpopular as the SEC is in financial quarters, its action in this case has not raised a murmur, for the very good reason that the A. G. and E. represents so flagrant an example of the holding-company racket that it is almost impossible to defend. It is not merely a holding company but a holder of holding companies—a set-up which vastly increased the amount of "water" in the system. Its final attempts to stave off bankruptcy are illuminating. Last year it applied for a loan to the RFC, which agreed to consider the proposition if certain strict conditions were observed, including its approval of management changes and salaries. While negotiations were in progress, Roger J. Whiteford, who had been general counsel for the FHA, was suddenly made president of A. G. and E. with the handsome salary of $10,000 a month. This appointment of an important Administration official failed to bring results. Jesse Jones of the RFC had not been consulted, and the change in management apparently did not impress him. The loan was refused, and when the SEC issued its ruling on dividend payments Mr. Hopson's hydro-financial empire filed its petition.

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THE WITHDRAWAL OF THIRTEEN OTHER nominees, eight specifically in his favor, was a striking recognition of Kenneth Crawford's fitness to succeed Heywood Broun as president of the American Newspaper Guild. More than four years of yeoman work as chairman of the Washington Guild's negotiating committee and a record of courageous journalism for the New York *Post* and *The Nation* would have been enough to commend Crawford to the Guild's membership, but there were other factors that underscored his eligibility. Geographically and by conviction he occupies a strategic middle ground. In almost all national organizations there is a tendency to look upon leadership from New York with a jaundiced eye. Whether justified or not, this fear of being dominated by "the New York crowd" is present in the Guild, and, to a small extent, so is the labor-political factionalism that clings to every trade union in times like these. What looks like a blend of these two factors is contained in the statement issued jointly by three of Crawford's fellow-nominees upon his indorsement by the New York Guild: "We are glad that the New York leadership has finally been brought to realize the desirability of broadening of control in the American Newspaper Guild. We join in the support of Crawford, whose candidacy originated in the opposition to that narrow domination." But harmony candidate though he may be, Crawford is anything but a fence-sitter. He has ideas about how the Guild should be run, "some of which," he announces, "conflict with current practice." One of these, it appears, involves the Guild's extreme addiction to political resolutions. "It is not the Guild's business," Crawford said in his first statement as president-elect, "to reform the world or the world's newspapers." That is taking a bull by the horns; it is also good trade unionism.

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WHEN YOU WALK INTO YOUR FAVORITE woods and find the brooks cleared, the trees trimmed, the brush in piles, and a new trail around the old pond, you can be pretty sure there's a CCC camp nearby. The Civilian Conservation Corps is perhaps the only project of the New Deal which everybody approves; even Republicans favor relief for trees. Robert Fechner, director of the CCC until his death on December 31, has left an eloquent record of his six years' work in his annual report for 1938, now issued posthumously. In six years the CCC has given jobs and valuable training to 2,600,000 men, most of them young men who might otherwise have been haunting the street corners of the nation. They have planted 1,855,000,000 trees, built 106,800 miles of trucks trails, and spent 9,375,000,000 man days fighting fires and preventing them. What this work in the open air under expert supervision—formerly military, but now civilian—has done for 2,600,000 men cannot be measured. "Work projects already suggested by federal and state departments would keep . . . 1,500 camps busy for from thirty to fifty years," says Mr. Fechner's last report. But for economy's sake the number is to be cut to 1,227, in face of the fact that according to one estimate four million young people are without jobs.

The Coughlin Terror

IN ARRESTING seventeen members of the "Christian Front," the FBI has drawn the curtain on a violent and ugly political underworld. Because only a handful of men have thus far been seized, there is a tendency in some quarters to minimize the disclosures, and to scoff at the notion of seventeen men preparing for *der Tag*. But this was no crackpot conspiracy of violence conceived by political lunatics. It contains all those recognizable elements of anti-democratic and anti-Semitic terror which were the preludes of European fascism. It is the most dramatic expression of a movement that is national—perhaps international—in scope and organization. The ringleaders arrested this week are political thugs who took the words of their leader seriously. Their leader is Charles E. Coughlin.

The precise number of persons intimately involved in the conspiracy is still unknown. Undoubtedly some members of the Christian Front were not let in on the details of the terrorist schedule which had been drawn

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up. But the art of terrorism has never required mass armies to achieve its prime objective. That objective is the inoculation of a populace with a sense of dread and panic in the face of an invisible enemy; it is accomplished by periodic, seemingly unrelated explosions, by sudden brutal forays against individuals. When hysteria is widespread, the chance for more serious business is at hand.

This exposure cannot be seen in its proper perspective without recognizing the role of Coughlin himself. Confronted with the revelations, Coughlin carefully disclaimed any link with the Front and blamed the plot on "Nazis or Communists." The words of his denial are disingenuous; the denial itself is a lie. Coughlin has not only advocated the idea of a Christian Front in general; he has been closely linked with this one in particular. On July 14, 1939, speaking by direct wire to a Philadelphia mass-meeting, he told his audience that "John Cassidy is our leader in the Christian Front." Cassidy himself delivered the principal address at the meeting, *Social Justice* reported on July 24. And it is Cassidy whom the FBI has now singled out as one of the two chief figures in the terrorist conspiracy. On July 31, 1939, *Social Justice* carried a lengthy report of the Front's progress under the headline: "Militant Units of Christian Front Being Formed in Middle West; Hosts Battle Communism in New York." The article reported enthusiastically: "Under the leadership of John F. Cassidy of Brooklyn there are now five central units operating in the metropolitan district." On several occasions Cassidy has shared speakers' platforms with Edward Lodge Curran. Curran is one of Coughlin's closest allies; he has frequently spoken on the priest's radio hour.

In view of Coughlin's palpable link with the Front, was he innocent of its preparations for violence? Would he shun such violent techniques? There is no conclusive evidence on this point. What we do know is that *Social Justice* recently reported approvingly the formation in New England of "rifle clubs" designed to "assist in quelling any revolutionary disturbance." We also know that less than two months ago *Social Justice* published "Father Coughlin's advice to the Christian Front"; it read: "Meet force with force only as a last resort." Behind the camouflage of the "defense mechanism," Coughlin has constantly hinted to his followers of impending violence and cited the Franco insurrection as a classic political model. Only a fortnight ago, in a national broadcast, he candidly announced his faith in the dictatorship idea.

What has been exposed thus far is only a fragment of the story. There is a visible effort in some newspapers to free Coughlin from embarrassment at the exposure. But without Coughlin himself the picture cannot be completed; and unless the FBI is prepared to unravel all the threads of Coughlinite intrigue, it may only have prepared a boomerang. It has accused the Christian Fronters of conspiring to overthrow the government; that accusation can hardly meet the "clear and present danger" test without far more sweeping revelations than have thus far been made.

Even the limited material already issued is a damning indictment of Coughlinism. It is also a startling commentary on the work of the Dies committee, which for two years has been looking under beds and behind fronts for "un-American activities." In the 5,000-page record published by that committee there are only parenthetical references to the Christian Front. And when Martin Dies addressed a New York "Americanism" meeting held in his honor last November, Christian Fronters crowded the balconies to cheer him. They had been admitted free.

When the Treaty Ends

ALL but a week of the six-month period of grace provided in the Japanese-American trade treaty has elapsed, and the United States has yet to formulate a policy to be adopted upon the expiration of the treaty. The most direct and logical action which could be taken would be to impose an embargo on the export of all war materials to Japan while that country persists in its illegal campaign of aggression in China. Such action was urged last week by Henry L. Stimson, former Secretary of State, in a brilliant statement printed in full in the New York *Times*. The war in Europe, cutting Japan off from its preferred source of supplies in Germany, has greatly increased the potential effectiveness of such a step. Japan now obtains some 75 per cent of its imported war supplies from the United States, and as the European conflict develops, its dependence on the United States will increase.

An embargo on exports is not, however, the only means of depriving Japan of essential war materials. Without ceasing our efforts for such a measure, it is well to recognize, as was pointed out in last week's *Nation*, the practicability of discriminatory action against imports from Japan. Punitive measures of this type would have the advantage of following the orthodox lines of American commercial policy. They would require no additional machinery beyond that already provided in the customs service and in the main no additional legislation. By depriving Japan of foreign exchange, they would limit its ability to obtain needed war supplies.

The Tariff Acts of 1930 and 1934 provide the Administration with power to take rather drastic defensive action against Japan's hostile and discriminatory trade practices. Section 303 of the 1930 act gives the President the right to impose a countervailing duty against any country which subsidizes its exports to the United States. This section was invoked last year in imposing a 25 per cent additional duty on a long list of German goods.

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Section 338 of the same act authorizes the President to proclaim additional duties, up to at least 50 per cent, on the products of any country which discriminates against the commerce of the United States, and to impose a special tax on goods carried in the ships of such a country. In case the discrimination continues, the President is empowered to ban all goods from the offending country.

While there is little doubt that many Japanese exports to this country are subsidized, and therefore liable to increased duties, the evidence of discrimination against American trade is even less disputable. In line with its general totalitarian trade policies Japan has deliberately discriminated against American exports and favored those of Manchoukuo, Germany, Italy, and the puppet Chinese regimes. The most serious form taken by this discriminatory policy has been the preferential treatment given cotton from North China to the disadvantage of American cotton. The result has been a complete wrecking of the traditional basis of Japanese-American trade, namely, the exchange of Japanese raw silk for American cotton. In the case of other goods, there is evidence that Japanese buyers have been instructed to place their orders in the Axis countries regardless of their individual preferences. Trade statistics issued just prior to the European war show a rise in Japanese purchases from both Italy and Germany at the expense of the United States. In the occupied sections of China, Japan has followed a systematic program designed to exclude the United States and other Western nations from the Chinese market.

In considering penalties it must not be forgotten that some 70 per cent of our imports from Japan consist of a non-dutiable item—silk. Percentage tariff increases, no matter how heavy, would be largely ineffective unless some duty were levied on silk. For this there are ample grounds. Section 338 of the 1930 act authorizes the President to levy new duties on the goods of countries which discriminate against American exports. We have referred to the flagrant discrimination practiced against American cotton. In addition, Japan has sought to take advantage of America's almost complete dependence on Japanese silk by boosting prices and levying increased freight rates on this one product—nearly all of which goes to the United States—with a view to making American consumers pay an increased share of Japan's war expenses. As a retaliatory measure, a duty of, say, 50 per cent ad valorem on silk would be wholly justified.

The Nation has steadfastly opposed high tariffs which are adopted solely on the pretext of protecting the American market. But low-tariff advocates have always recognized the necessity for penalties to protect American exports from discrimination by countries which profit by our own non-discriminatory policies. And in this instance the United States has, in addition, a moral obligation to dissociate itself in every way from active economic assistance to the Japanese war machine.

Jews in Hitler's Poland

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

SOMETIMES I hear decent peole who don't like war wondering whether a Nazi victory would after all be so tragic. They try to think of it as a more or less logical alternative to the "anarchy" and disorganization of the Europe of the past twenty-five years. Hitler is an aggressor, that's true; but so was Napoleon. Was Europe better for the twenty years of struggle to resist the Napoleonic "Continental system"? Hitler, too, is trying to create a system, a stable, unified Europe under his own domination. The day of France and Britain is done; they had their chance and they muffed it. Now let Hitler—and perhaps Stalin—try to create the "new Europe" that must supersede a run-down system supported by two run-down empires. This is the argument, though it is seldom so flatly stated.

People who feel that a Nazi peace and a Nazi-dominated Europe are preferable to their horrible alternative should stop to consider the state of the territories already in process of organization by Hitler. Austria, the Bohemian-Moravian Protectorate, German Poland, Memel—a great area contiguous to the old Reich—are being coordinated as fast as administrators and secret police and troops can do the work. Whole populations are being shifted as if they were armies in order to wipe out the cultural as well as the political boundaries that divided the conquered states from each other and from Germany. And the Jewish problem is being "solved." In a laboratory of occupied or incorporated territory the Nazis are constructing a working model of the "new Europe."

Mr. Villard wrote an article from The Hague, which appeared in our issue of December 30, describing the situation of the Jews deported to Poland from various parts of the Reich. It was based on the results of his own inquiries in Germany and is the best report so far published. I shall do no more than add items appearing in the newspapers before and after Mr. Villard wrote.

The scheme for shifting populations in the conquered territories to make space for Germans and to get rid of Jews was announced officially from Berlin. It was reported in October that a reservation between Lublin and the Soviet border would be set aside for Jews evacuated from Posen and West Prussia. Later, Nazi authorities announced that other areas in the same general region would be turned into Jewish reservations and that Jews would be sent in from all over the Reich. Early in November an item from Bruenn, Czechoslovakia, told of 300 unemployed Jews from that town being deported into Poland, there to be supported by contributions from the remaining Jews in Bruenn. Deportations, said the same dispatch, were to be made from the whole protec-

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torate; only old people and some women and children would be left behind.

Later in the month it was reported, also from Berlin, that Warsaw's ghetto had been cut off from the rest of the city by barricades patrolled by armed guards. No Jews were allowed to pass through them without being thoroughly searched. A dispatch from Kattowitz in German Poland said that some 5,000 "women, children, and infirm men" must leave that town and Teschen for the Lublin reservation by December 15. Another item added the fact that Jewish men between the ages of fourteen and seventy and women under fifty-five who had been shipped to the reservation had been put to forced labor. An Associated Press dispatch from Lodz stated briefly that a curfew for Jews had been established and that any Jew leaving home between the hours of five p. m. and eight a. m. might be punished by death. The death penalty could also be applied to Jews who failed to wear the broad yellow arm band prescribed by law.

Figures and dates do not always coincide in these fragmentary dispatches. A story from Berlin dated November 26 reported that the Jews of Teschen had been given two extra weeks to evacuate the city, but must all be out by December 9. When they left they would be almost the last of 150,000 Jews to be transported from the former Czech provinces to Poland; the deportations from Austria were also virtually completed; from Moravská-Ostrava the whole Jewish population of 10,000 had left for the Polish reservation on the River San. The Gestapo was supervising the forced migration.

All the facts so far cited are from German dispatches, presumably censored and including only what the Nazis want known. Since the beginning of December reports direct from Germany have all but stopped. To discover the reason, it is necessary to turn to dispatches from other centers. These tell stories of unimaginable horror in the reservation and in the ghettos of Polish towns. Jewish deportees are starving, freezing, homeless, jobless, and without money; thousands are ill of typhus and other diseases. The reservation has become a place of death and a center of infection. The hospitals are overflowing. A recent dispatch from Paris reports that "Dr. Frank, who visited the reservation a few days ago, is reported to be dissatisfied. . . . He told his aides . . . that the idea of the reservation is difficult to work out and too costly, as foreign Jews are unwilling to pour relief money into a reservation." So 60,000 Jews from various parts of the Reich who were to have been sent into the reserved area are now "concentrated near Cracow" and ghettos are being established in various Polish towns.

This is only a fragment of the story, as the fate of the Jews is only a fragment of the fate of the subject peoples of the Reich. The Poles themselves have in thousands been arrested, or executed, or moved to other parts of Germany, or simply turned out of their homes to make room for Germans or the transplanted Balts. A mania of migration possesses Hitler. Into the new "living-space" Germans must spread to accomplish the Teutonic occupation of the whole land. The original inhabitants are being dispersed, to serve as workers under the master race and to shed the bonds that bind them to their native soil and customs and kin. And the Jews are merely to be segregated, without means—for their wealth is confiscated—and without rights, segregated to live or to die as their richer brothers in other lands may determine. Hitler washes his hands of them.

But the rest of the world, slowly awakening to the savage internal warfare that is destroying the lives of millions along with the basic human decencies, cannot wash its hands of either Hitler or his victims. The state of Poland, the new mass torture of the Jews form too clear a blueprint of what Hitler intends for Europe. It is a challenge to the humanity of all of us. It is also a challenge to our understanding and determination. If we don't like the picture of Hitler's "Continental system," what do we want? And how do we intend to get it?

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A Hull-Jackson Ticket

BY KENNETH G. CRAWFORD

Washington, January 15

WASHINGTON is currently engaged in a game of blind man's buff with all but one player blindfolded. The President, it is assumed, knows what his Administration is up to. Everyone else is groping. It is obvious that he has been pursuing a policy of deliberate befuddlement. The trouble is that he has succeeded too well. He has confused his allies no less than his enemies.

Since the first of the year he has made three major speeches: his opening address to Congress, his budget message, and his "plate-side chat." The first was a straightforward statement of anti-dictatorship, non-isolationist policy, but it was immediately followed by the President's refusal to take the initiative in applying this policy to Finland. The second was an admirable defense of his spending policy coupled with a recommendation for budget economy. The third was a warning to his party not to lose the independent vote; it failed to tell how to hold this vote.

All is confusion, principally, of course, because there has been no answer to the key questions: Will the President run for a third term, and if not whom will he support? If his political plans were known, other pieces of the great puzzle would start falling into place.

The President himself supplied no clues on Jackson Day, but by dovetailing his speech with those of Attorney General Robert H. Jackson in Cleveland and Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace in Des Moines it was possible to make out a good prima facie case for a third-term intention. Indeed, the case was too good. It was too obvious that the President, in writing his own speech and approving the other two, was trying to revive third-term speculation, which had been obscured in the succession of booms for McNutt, Garner, and most recently Secretary of State Hull.

Instead of intensifying the impression that a third term is possible, the Jackson Day speeches had the opposite effect. The New Deal loyalists still hope the President will run, and they are still talking for effect of the chance that he would accept a draft nomination, but the grapevine carries apparently authentic stories that Mr. Roosevelt's intimates have despaired of persuading him to carry the awful burdens of his office for another four years, that he longs for renewal of the kind of personal relationship that is impossible in the White House and is literally counting the days until his term expires.

These stories account for the seriousness with which the recent Hull try-out has been taken. There can be no doubt that the President thrust Hull into the spotlight by talking up his availability to visitors and by underwriting his reciprocal trade program. In consequence of the President's strong support, it now appears that the Trade Agreements Act may be renewed despite Republican opposition and furious log-rolling by tariff-fed industries and agricultural interests. If it is, Hull's stock cannot but rise.

It is significant, too, that Attorney General Jackson has been advanced for the vice-presidential nomination on the Hull ticket. It is generally accepted as fact here that Jackson and Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas are the two men to whom the President would most willingly hand over his office. But neither is conceded a chance of getting the Presidential nomination. Jackson might get by as Hull's running mate, however.

Viewed in the light of this political possibility, what goes on in Washington is somewhat less puzzling. The President is trying to keep attention focused on foreign affairs. He has won general acceptance of his foreign policy, which is also Hull's. He has ridden it back into high public favor if the polls of public opinion are to be trusted. It is a horse whose rider might be successfully changed in midstream. Where domestic policy is concerned, the President has given enough ground to his critics to shut them up. Robert Taft and the other Republican hopefuls can mutter about balancing the budget, but they can't justify any more red penciling than the President has already done unless they start crossing out national-defense items and brave the popular demand for more ships, guns, and airplanes. The President's compromise strategy also has gone a long way toward reuniting his own party and creating a situation in which Hull, who is essentially conservative, could run without compromising himself.

The jigsaw picture emerges, but there is one important piece missing. What about the liberals, the people who were for the New Deal before it was watered down? Have they disappeared? Would they be satisfied with the ghoulish comfort that Jackson might eventually get into the White House? They are weakly represented in this Congress, and their political effectiveness has been undermined by the split in the labor movement and other schisms. They are inclined to accept Roosevelt on faith, confident even when his immediate position displeases them that his general direction is good. They cannot be delivered in a drove to Hull or anyone else.

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Conceding that there has been a swing to the right in public opinion, it has not been sweeping enough to wipe liberals off the face of the United States.

The President's greatest danger, if he is trying to hand the Presidency to a conservative on the theory that a liberal cannot be nominated, is that Congress will follow the figures in his budget message rather than the text. Competent economists expect a recession next spring. If it comes, the President's estimates for relief and public works will be tragically inadequate. There will be no government prop for business, and there will be hungry people. These consequences of this winter's policy of silencing conservatives by stealing their thunder will not be good advertising for a tired New Deal.

Liberals will have little voice in the Democratic convention, it is true, and even if the Democrats ignore them they cannot turn to the Republicans. But as Secretary of Interior Ickes has suggested, they might consider a futile third-party effort preferable to political orphanage. They will do nothing until the third term is definitely out, which may be one of the reasons for perpetuating the mystery.

Polling America

BY JAMES WECHSLER

TO 150,000 "men in the street," and women, the emissaries of the American Institute of Public Opinion last year propounded more than 500 questions. Should the Wagner Act be changed and in what manner? Do you know the words of the Star-Spangled Banner? Do newspapers lie, does Martin Dies? Where do you stand on Passamaquoddy, Tom Dewey, topless bathing suits, foreign policy, and shorts for women, and did you make any New Year's resolutions? Should the railroads be owned collectively; do you think so mildly or strongly? The replies were tabulated by men and machines in a Princeton, New Jersey, office; 106 newspapers published the findings several times a week as a candid-camera view of the American mind.

Dr. George Gallup, who guides the institute, and Elmo Roper, who directs the monthly survey for *Fortune,* are the leading lights of the flourishing public-opinion industry. Alumni of the school of market research, Gallup and Roper operate in visibly non-proletarian environments. Gallup divides his time between his duties as an advertising executive for Young and Rubicam and his supervisory work at the institute. When Roper isn't exploring the public mind for *Fortune,* he is running surveys for commercial clients who want private information on public preferences. The institute's surveys made their debut on front pages in 1935 shortly after the appearance of the first *Fortune* analyses. To advanced students there are some marked differences between the methods of Gallup and Roper, but in any general appraisal the similarities overshadow the contrasts. Critics of the polls make little distinction between them.

In some measure attacks on the polls stem from popular disbelief in the integrity of the findings. If Gallup's interviewers descend on 150,000 people a year, and Roper's surveyors question about 30,000, together they touch less than .002 of the population in a year. Most people think the accuracy of a poll proportionate to its numerical scope; so the suspicion grows that someone has been electioneering in the vicinity of the polls. Yet the *Fortune* survey, based on 10,000 personal interviews, not only forecast the Roosevelt landslide but came within .07 per cent of giving the precise plurality. More recently Gallup's institute, from fewer than 2,000 ballots, prophesied Governor Lehman's election over Tom Dewey within 1 per cent of the total vote. The secret of these success stories is simple: they prove that it is far more important to buttonhole a genuine cross-section than to correspond by mail with a million citizens whose names appear in the telephone book. The classic failure of the phone-book theory was the *Literary Digest* poll, which on the basis of 2,376,523 mailed ballots predicted that Landon was in. Nevertheless, it is still fashionable to ask, "Have you ever met anybody who knows someone who has met anyone who has been interviewed by the Gallup poll?" The odds are high that the answer will be no. The inference is obvious: Gallup makes up the answers as well as the questions.

As the polls grow older and their circle of chance acquaintances expands, this skepticism may quietly die out. Less likely to disappear is the school of thought which contends that the polls are intrinsically a menace to the republic: they reveal only the sum total of popular ignorance; they foster the heresy that Mr. Milquetoast has something to say and a right to be heard even between election days; they thereby imperil the structure of "representative government."

The right's laments are not *a priori* reason for cheers on the left. For if the right is afraid that the polls will disclose the majority will at embarrassing moments, liberals may legitimately fear the reverse—manipulation of the polls by the conservative interests which ultimately pay for them. The statistical accuracy of surveys of pre-election preferences is verifiable on Election Day; Gallup's findings on issues like the Wagner Act, which justifiably

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occupy the bulk of the institute's time, cannot be checked. If the results of a badly worded or miscounted poll are published at a critical legislative moment, the damage will be in proportion to the influence of the institute, and its influence is steadily mounting. When it reports that 75 per cent of the people who have any opinion on the subject favor another Congressional bounty for Martin Dies, the result is quoted in countless conservative editorial columns.

To what extent do these surveys offer authentic, meaningful glimpses into the American mind? I witnessed interviews in three cities, observing the "sample" persons questioned on a one-day Gallup—night watchmen, day nurses, policemen, bacteriologists, business executives, relief workers. Before interviews begin, two crucial steps in the manufacture of polls have been completed. The questions have been formulated and "pre-tested," and the cross-section has been selected. There is ample chance for sabotage along this assembly line.

Phrasing the ballots is a nightmare in semantics. At the Gallup Institute they are drafted by Gallup and four aides whose politics range from left Democrat to right Republican; the *Fortune* surveys are planned at editorial conferences in the *Fortune* offices with Roper and his staff. Roper voted for Norman Thomas in 1932 and for Roosevelt in 1936. Gallup is farther to the right but voices a faith in the "common man" that would not recommend him to the Union League Club. Both men are conscientiously groping for a vantage point above the battle where questions can be formulated in a spirit of peace and neutrality. Nevertheless, neither one escapes all the pitfalls of catechism construction. The most obvious can be indicated by a single case history. Roper conducted a test survey on the question: "Should the United States do all in its power to promote world peace?" Ninety-seven per cent of the answers were affirmative. To the same cross-section he addressed the question: "Should the United States become involved in plans to promote world peace?" Only 60 per cent said yes. The problem is rarely as simple as this exhibit might imply. While "involved" is a flagrantly "bad" word, the creation of a neutral vocabulary for polls is still an infant science. Nor are "bad" words the only device by which questions may be stacked. A recent Columbia University survey revealed the degree to which answers may be influenced by positive or negative formulation of questions and other variations in sentence structure.

Even if the poll makers lived in a shock-proof ivory tower, the chances of possible distortion would be many. As it is, they are constantly subjected to the slings and arrows of outraged pressure groups. When Gallup's institute reported that 42 per cent of America's Catholic population wanted the embargo on Spain lifted, its findings were at once assailed in Catholic press and pulpit. A priest informed Gallup that he had taken a "show of hands" in his own parish and his findings totally contradicted the institute's; hence Gallup must be either mistaken or mischievous. All partisan groups tend to inhabit a dream world in which they see only friendly nods. But their pressure may have its effects, however subtle.

What may prove more insidious than these demonstrations is the dependence of Dr. Gallup's industry on the good-will of a press which is predominantly conservative. The fees of subscribing newspapers support the institute; inevitably there have been rumors that the polls would be loaded to keep the clientèle contented. If editorial writers claim to speak for "the people" and these surveys reveal that they don't, Gallup's difficulties may become acute. So far there have been few illustrations of clear-cut bias, but the errors which have crept in dramatize the danger. In April, 1938, the institute asked: "In your opinion which will do more to get us out of the depression—increased public spending for relief and public works or helping business by reducing taxes?" When it reported that 79 per cent favored helping business, the result got widespread acclamation from tory circles. Was it a fair question? "Helping business" has affirmative overtones; "spending" is almost an epithet. Moreover, liberals argue that "spending" would "help business" while the stimulus of "reduced taxes" might prove negligible. Actually the question accepted a Wall Street diagnosis of our economic ills. More recently the institute queried: "Do you think that labor unions should be regulated to a greater extent by the federal government?" An overwhelming majority said yes. Such a poll could be used as evidence of popular clamor for federal curbs on labor unions. What would have happened if the question had posed specific federal restrictions instead of the general, amiable concept of "regulation"? Last April the institute asked: "Do you think there are any persons on relief in your community who could get jobs in private industry if they tried?" Sixty-nine per cent said yes. That was dynamite for the anti-relief offensive. But suppose the word "any" had been "many"?

These are random examples. In the course of a year the institute releases polls on more than 250 public issues; a large majority of them are susceptible to no such criticism. Moreover, there is evidence that the flaws are diminishing. One of the most conspicuous improvements has been the listing of "no opinions." When the institute took its first poll on the Wagner Act it reported that a majority desired alterations in the statute. What it failed to report was that nearly half the people interviewed had no opinion either way. The omission resulted in a woefully erroneous picture. The Roper poll has always reported its "no opinions."

In the fashioning of a "sample," the basic assumption is that from 3,000 to 8,000 people—if they are the right people—offer a pretty faithful picture of American

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thinking. Old-time "straw votes" were based on random interviews in the neighborhood saloon or on mail ballots from anyone who bothered to respond. Now it is recognized that a valid sampling must reach—in person—an accurate ratio (to the whole nation) of voters from each state, from rural communities, towns, and cities of varying size, of men and women, of different age groups and of every economic level, and of varying political allegiances. To get these proportions, election returns, census reports, and similar documents are constantly sifted. When an interviewer sets out he is not only given his printed sheets listing about fifteen questions, but he is told how many people in each category—"wealthy," "average-plus," "average," "poor-plus," "poor," "on relief"—must be accosted, on street corners or in their homes. A poll is normally completed within two weeks from the time the questions are sent out, and emergency surveys are sometimes rushed through in as short a time as twenty-four hours. With a staff of 1,000 interviewers who work part time for 65 cents an hour, Gallup can scarcely guarantee the integrity of each investigator. He believes none the less in maintaining a political balance in his field force: 35 per cent are Democrats, 37 per cent Republicans, 5 per cent belong to "other parties," and 23 per cent profess no allegiance. Roper employs only 72 interviewers, each of whom he knows intimately. With greater leisure to compile his *Fortune* surveys, he has wider opportunities for experimentation and checking. He suffers from the corollary disadvantage that if one or two of his staff go wrong, their defections will have proportionately greater impact on his results.

What have the answers to good questions, addressed intelligently to the right cross-section, proved about America? Above all they have revealed an incredibly animated populace anxious to articulate its fears, resentments, and loyalties. Although probably less than one in twenty of those interviewed have ever heard of the Gallup Institute, only a handful won't talk. At first they suspect that the interviewer is a salesman; they are occasionally reluctant to disclose their political affiliations, especially if they are on relief; and they are frequently awkward in framing their beliefs. Yet there is a perceptible undertone of excitement in these interviews which the statistics don't record; to a host of Americans the polls represent a unique adventure in democratic life. On issues which have immediate personal impact, like involvement in war, they grasp at the chance to divulge what they are thinking, with the hope that someone in Washington will see the answers.

Cumulatively the polls reflect that strange blend of self-interest, idealism, and stereotyped reaction which is the essential nature of "public opinion." They reveal major shifts in enthusiasms, preferences, and prejudices. They have shown the degree to which Franklin D. Roosevelt is almost a deity to rank-and-file citizens and the degree to which propaganda against specific New Deal reforms has been able to overshadow the Roosevelt magic. They are less able to tell us where we are going, or to define precise attitudes toward particular developments on the way. There is no reliable barometer of intensity. Both the *Fortune* and Gallup surveys, for example, show an overwhelming desire to stay out of war, even if the Allies are losing, and, in percentages, a similarly sweeping sympathy for the Allied cause. At some point there may be a collision between these two aspects of America's split personality. If the Allies are losing and need men, which symbols—isolationist or interventionist—will prevail? To what extent will a sudden shock—like the bombing of London—invalidate the form-charts? In trying to evaluate intensity Roper employs a "menu" type of ballot giving a detailed series of choices within the framework of a single issue. Gallup sometimes has his interviewers estimate the vigor of responses; on other occasions they ask the person being interviewed to tell how "strongly" he holds a particular opinion. The first method places enormous responsibility on the interviewer's perception and is subject to individual variations in language. The second leads to all sorts of complications, as in the following dialogue which I witnessed:

Q. Do you think that labor unions should be regulated to a greater extent by the federal government?
A. (strongly) Yes.
Q. Do you believe that strongly?
A. (weakly) Yes.

A housewife vigorously asserted that she favored a third term for President Roosevelt. When asked whether she favored that strongly, she shook her head. Consider the following dialogue:

Q. In general do you approve or disapprove today of Roosevelt as President?
A. (strongly) I think he's doing a good job.
Q. Secretary Wallace says the war in Europe has made it necessary for Roosevelt to have a third term. Do you agree?
A. Yes, I think it does.
Q. If Tom Dewey runs for President in 1940 on the Republican ticket against President Roosevelt running for a third term, which would you prefer?
A. (strongly) Tom Dewey.

I heard a transit worker passionately tell one of Roper's interviewers that "the reds should all be shut up by the government," and in the next breath assert that the government should support all the needy "even if it means the end of the capitalist system." There is nothing extraordinary about these contradictions. But they make the polls far more useful as a mirror of the moment than as blueprints of the future.

If polls on great and dramatic issues like the war re-

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veal divided impulses, opinion on issues like the Wagner Act is far more difficult to evaluate. Questions may reveal anything from elaborate confusion to unadorned ignorance. This dialogue was held with a night watchman:

Q. Do you think the Wagner Act should be repealed, revised, or left alone?

A. I guess it ought to be changed.

Q. In what way should it be changed?

A. Well, to tell the truth, I don't know much about it but I read all the time in the paper that it should be changed, so I guess there must be something wrong.

And this answer was received from a laundry owner after the same question was put to him:

A. Yes, it should be repealed for a lot of changes. First, they got to figure costs. Wagner don't know anything; he has an income. They just figure minimum wages; they don't care where it comes from.

Such answers may not contribute a great deal to the sum of human knowledge about labor relations, but they do show the stealthy power of anti-labor propaganda.

Possibly the most grotesque interview I witnessed was this one:

Q. Do you think that Germany is carrying on propaganda in the United States?

A. Oh, sure.

Q. In what way?

A. Oh, by sinkin' our ships.

Q. Why do you think they are carrying on such propaganda?

A. I guess they want to get us into war.

More common is the simple confession of ignorance: to questions about the undistributed-profits tax, 70 per cent admitted that they didn't know what the controversy was about. That, too, is worth recording.

After watching fifty interviews I could cite a large number of cases in which the answers were based on half-knowledge and intuition. But against those I could cite many others in which keen insight was revealed by people who were, in a sense, just learning to talk because nobody had previously asked them anything. When *Life* published its pictures of the "Birth of a Baby," all the decency legionnaires cried out in protest. It sounded as if America were unanimous in its repudiation of the facts of life. The Gallup Institute reported that a large majority of the persons it interviewed approved of the publication. This was important and useful news, and it is not a unique example; the polls have encouraged the suspicion that Americans have minds. Undoubtedly there are "blanks," but one "blank" is no proof that "the masses is asses."

During the recent Congressional debate on foreign policy Americans were confronted anew with a twentieth-century phenomenon: government by telegram. At periodic signals from Royal Oak, Father Coughlin's faithful didn't walk, they ran, to the nearest telegraph office. Simultaneously the Hearst newspapers published coupons supporting the embargo which readers were implored to send to Washington. If legislators had relied on mails and wires for their judgment of popular feeling, they would have been obliged to conclude that the United States was pro-embargo. Both the *Fortune* and Gallup polls revealed the falsity of that view. Frank Gannett has demonstrated the potentialities of open-letter writing, bulwarked by newspaper advertisements, radio appeals, mass circularizing. In these clashes God is on the side of the biggest financial battalions; so are the newspapers. The polls represent a tremendous effort to democratize the business of pressure.

They also have a long-term function. Democracy has been throttled elsewhere because democrats underestimated the strength and momentum of the anti-democratic crusade. The polls act as storm warnings. They reveal anti-labor hysteria, susceptibility or resistance to reactionary slogans, fluctuations in attitude toward social reform. In recent years Americans have been disturbed by the spread of anti-Semitic propaganda. The *Fortune* survey on anti-Semitism provided documentary evidence of the degree to which anti-Semitism has permeated American life. For some time we have suspected the range of political corruption in a state like Louisiana. The Gallup Institute directly and privately asked the voters of that state whether they thought the balloting was corrupt. The answer was appalling.

But if they are to serve as a brake on active minorities or as a map for sociologists, the polls themselves must be free from suspicion. It is true that the enterprises are competitive, and if Gallup's findings are strikingly dissimilar to Roper's, someone is likely to investigate the discrepancy. It is also true that one major scandal would bury any polling business. But as long as the major polls are private investments, a measure of skepticism will survive. Although it would be just as perilous to place the taking of polls exclusively in the hands of a government agency, the existence of a government-sponsored poll, functioning side by side with private ones, might well lessen some of the present risk. This does not mean a vote of no confidence in Gallup or Roper; Roper himself has vigorously advocated government-run polls—a "TVA" for the opinion-finding industry. They are both making a brave, thoughtful, and impressive exploration of heretofore uncrossed frontiers. I am suggesting that the assignment is too formidable to be restricted to a few private persons, subject only to the restraints of competition and conscience.

The polls are likely to grow rather than diminish in significance. The charge that they threaten to usurp Congressional functions is double-edged. For it is relevant only if the gulf between people and Congress has ominously widened. That disclosure alone would justify the industry's existence.

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The Pound and Franc Unite

BY FRITZ STERNBERG

THE course of this war is dotted with surprises. Nobody expected it to start with the present amazing alignment of powers: Britain and France against a Germany bound to the U. S. S. R. by ties of close friendship and various trade treaties, with Italy really maintaining its neutrality. Nobody could have predicted that for several months after its start the war would be limited to occasional skirmishes on the western front. But one of the many predictions made by military oracles has come true: the war is being fought most vigorously on the economic front.

In 1914 the economic strength of Britain and France was very great, the two countries having enjoyed a comparatively long period of unbroken peace. Their reserves appeared practically inexhaustible. Consequently each country followed its own economic course. British and French purchasing commissions worked independently abroad and even competed with each other for badly needed foreign goods. Today the Allies have urgent reasons to join economic forces. Not only have economic weapons increased in importance, but Britain as well as France entered this war with impaired resources. Britain embarked on the first World War with a balanced budget. Today the remaining burdens of that war of twenty-five years ago still affect the financial equilibrium of the country. War debts to the United States remain unpaid. The books of the British Treasury still carry a national war debt amounting to about seven billion pounds, annual interest on which represents a heavy burden on the taxpayers. In the past ten years France has never succeeded in balancing its budget. Aside from its "ordinary" budget, it has been compelled to carry an "extraordinary" budget, covered by loans and short-term debentures. In addition, the franc has deteriorated in value by about 90 per cent since the outbreak of the first World War. The years from 1919 to 1939 were marked by much more economic disturbance than those preceding 1914. Further economic progress was not attained. On the contrary, the total amount of British and French foreign assets was reduced during this period. Moreover, the economic systems of Britain and France were adversely influenced by ever-increasing preparations for war that started years before the conflict broke out.

To overcome these disadvantages a joint Anglo-French Economic Staff has been created. A common economy is expected to compensate for the reduced resources of the Allies and to enable them to fill the gaps in their economic reserves.

What are the tasks facing the Allied Economic General Staff? With headquarters in London, it is subdivided into six departments—for aviation, armament, raw materials, oil, food, and navigation. The aviation department's immediate task is the acceleration of aircraft production. At the beginning of the war Germany had a distinct advantage in this respect. It is imperative to increase Allied production so that superiority in the air may be attained in the shortest possible time. In the matter of armament the highly developed British industrial system has already been able to render good service to the French army, which relies on a smaller industrial base. The production of armaments is being divided according to a common plan, and supplies are being distributed to the best advantage of both parties.

The remaining four sections of the Economic General Staff handle imports from foreign countries and the problem of their transportation. In this sphere it was soon found that the financing of foreign purchases required entirely new regulations. Britain's chief economic weakness soon manifested itself: the pound's international rate of exchange could not be maintained at its peacetime level. During the comparatively short period which has elapsed since the outbreak of the war the pound has lost about one-fifth of its value. The franc has followed a parallel course. Moreover, the devaluation of the pound took place before there had been any considerable increase of British imports. The static character of the warfare along the western front has required no great replacement of war materials, and the Anglo-French armament industries have been able to cope with the limited demand. This premature devaluation of the pound bodes ill for the future. If at a time of limited imports the pound lost one-fifth of its value, it may be expected to lose much more after imports have increased to correspond with greater activity on the western front. To mitigate the severe financial shocks that would result from the consumption of huge stocks of war materials, the Allied Economic General Staff decided on common financing of all foreign purchases. In their relations to foreign exporters Britain and France are thus a single economic unit. And the alliance goes even farther. While a firm relation between the pound and the franc existed prior to the war, the recent agreement makes this relation absolutely fixed. To all practical purposes Britain and France have now a common currency, even though it is still called "pound" in England and "franc" in France. All foreign purchases are made jointly, and the bills—

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payable in England—are charged to separate accounts at a fixed ratio. Great Britain carries 60 per cent of all expenses accruing abroad and France 40 per cent, a ratio which Britain refused to accept during the first World War.

Two factors are responsible for Britain's decision to carry the financial burdens of the war at a ratio of three to two. First, Great Britain is an extremely wealthy country with foreign assets and gold reserves considerably in excess of those of France. Secondly, German propaganda has left nothing undone to separate France from Britain. The controlled German press refuses to accept France as an enemy. Mussolini's wisecrack, "Britain is determined to fight to the last Frenchman," was made into a slogan by the Nazi propaganda machine. German loud-speakers installed along the Westwall blare day and night trying to convince the poilus that they are being used for Britain's selfish imperialistic aims. The Anglo-French economic agreement is the Allies' answer to this German propaganda. It demonstrates their determination to achieve permanent cooperation on the basis of mutual interests. Also, the British are perhaps willing to carry the greater economic burden in return for the greater human sacrifices that may be demanded from the French. There are at present only a few hundred thousand British troops in France as against the almost four million mobilized Frenchmen. It is not expected that even in 1940 the numerical strength of the British expeditionary force will exceed one or one and a half million men. If the war develops large-scale actions in the near future or in the spring, French soldiers will be called upon to do the bulk of the fighting.

To the Germans Britain's assumption of the greater responsibility in financing the war demonstrates the stubborn determination of the English to mobilize and use all their resources. But the Germans cannot afford to admit that they are impressed. The old propaganda continues unabated in Berlin, and the Allies' economic cooperation is represented as another British trap laid for the gullible French. The Deutsches Nachrichten Bureau, the official German news agency, commented at length on the creation of the Economic General Staff, emphasizing that its remarks represented the official reaction of the Nazi government. The importance of the economic alliance was minimized in an explanation which bore all the marks of impotent fury.

> Following official cues [it ran] the entire British press and radio greeted this "economic alliance" with inspired hymns of praise whose extravagance made one suspect that something was to be hushed up. An examination of the purposes and consequences of the Anglo-French agreement confirms and justifies our suspicions. . . . Since all British gold reserves are exhausted, Britain has no gold at its disposal. During the past fourteen months Britain has sent no less than three billion dollars in gold to the United States. The losses of gold were sufficiently alarming to keep these shipments a closely guarded secret. At the request of the British government the Treasury of the United States ceased to publish the usual weekly reports concerning European gold shipments to the United States.
>
> To finance its American purchases, Britain has already been compelled to sell its shares of American corporations. Up to 50,000 such shares are being sold daily on American stock exchanges, a process which cannot of course be continued indefinitely. On the other hand, Britain spends considerable amounts in French francs for military purposes. If these francs and the dollars required for armament purchases were to be bought with English pounds, it would be impossible to hold up the pound on its declivitous course. Obviously, one of the main tasks of the Anglo-French agreement is to protect the two currencies and to enable both governments to dispose of the reserves of the two countries.
>
> To comply with these aims, France will be compelled to employ its still considerable gold reserves of almost 100 billion francs for the support of the English pound and to pay the bills of not only French but also English armament purchases in the United States. Furthermore, France will be compelled to cover British military expenses with francs at the pound's present rate of exchange. Thus France has renounced even the possibility of an independent exchange policy and hung the franc's fate permanently on that of the pound. Aside from using French gold for its own purposes, Britain has coupled its pound with the franc, thus dragging the franc into the abyss into which the pound, abandoned by all the world, has fallen.

Every sentence of this official German explanation is inaccurate. Anyone acquainted with the figures published by the Federal Reserve Board will be surprised to learn that Britain has no more gold at its disposal and requires the gold of the Bank of France to support the pound. There has been a fairly steady sale of British-owned shares on American stock exchanges, and it has in fact gone as high as 50,000 shares on a single day, as the Germans assert; but even if sales reached this figure every day it would take more than six years for the British to lose all their American holdings. The same *Frankfurter Zeitung* which printed the German government's fantastic explanation stated only a few weeks before that Great Britain's and Canada's financial reserves in the United States amounted to 1.8 billion dollars in gold and to 3.8 billion dollars in other salable assets. The sudden disappearance of these funds is a mystery. Only the German Propaganda Ministry knows the solution.

The Germans' unconcealed wrath testifies to the uneasiness with which official Nazi circles received the news of Anglo-French economic cooperation. In spite of what the Nazis say in their controlled press, France's position will be considerably improved, since it will be able to lean heavily on the enormous financial reserves and resources

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PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 10, 1940

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of the British Empire. The immediate results of the agreement can be summarized as follows:

1. The stability of English and French currencies in their relation to foreign currencies and especially to the dollar will be increased. Britain and France together have foreign assets and gold reserves of from five to six billion pounds.

2. The trade of Britain and France and that of their two empires will be stimulated. Trade barriers between Britain and France will be partially removed. Since all English and French purchases from the United States must be on a cash basis, it is obvious that the Allies will try to buy as much as possible within their own empires, where practically unlimited credits are at their disposal and they need not draw on their foreign reserves.

3. As an ever-increasing section of the national economy is changed into a war economy under the direct control of the Allied Economic General Staff, the influence of the two states on their respective economic systems will simultaneously increase. In the process of this transition the sovereign rights of the two countries will be subjected to fundamental limitations, a fact which may be of extraordinary significance at a future date. The most important single feature of the Anglo-French economic agreement is that it will continue for six months beyond the duration of the war. Thus its final effect may be to change the entire economic structure of Europe.

Prior to the war Germany possessed the greatest industrial system in Europe. During the months that immediately preceded the outbreak of the war, German industrial production surpassed that of Great Britain by one-third and that of France by two-fifths. The two countries together, however, even without their empire possessions and dominions, take the lead from Germany. If this Anglo-French economic union can be maintained after the war, the combined industrial system will be definitely dominant in Europe. Certain events of past years foreshadow a development along these lines. The Ottawa conference of 1931 instituted closer cooperation between Great Britain and its dominions and colonies. This move turned out to be a step toward the consolidation of the British Empire along modern economic lines. Similarly, the present Anglo-French economic cooperation might result in a consolidation of Anglo-French economic relations which would persist long after the temporary emergency of war. The immediate importance of such a union to the rest of the world becomes clear when one considers that the Anglo-French bloc embraces more than five hundred million people scattered all over the earth.

Much is being said about the post-war reconstruction of a new Europe. Anglo-French economic cooperation may become one of the cornerstones upon which the work of reconstruction can be started.

Idealists as Cynics

BY REINHOLD NIEBUHR

NO NATION has ever been driven to political confusion in its judgments on foreign affairs by a greater variety of absolutist creeds than our contemporary America. The creeds are various, but they have in common the tendency to measure political realities, not in terms of possible historical alternatives, but by comparison with purely ideal possibilities. This is a fatal weakness in the realm of politics, for political values are highly relative. We never have the chance to choose between pure tyranny and pure freedom; we can only choose between tyranny and relative democracy. We do not have the choice between war and perfect peace, but only between war and the uneasy peace of some fairly decent and stable equilibrium of social forces. We cannot choose between violence and non-violence, but only between violence and a statesmanship which seeks to adjust social forces without violence but cannot guarantee immunity from clashes. We have never had the opportunity—and probably never will have—to choose between injustice and perfect equality, but only between injustice and a justice which moves toward equality and incorporates some of its values.

This obvious fact, to which all history attests, is denied either explicitly or implicitly by a wide variety of modern social creeds. These creeds, each of which probably has its own validity within measure, have combined their errors in such a way as to spread confusion. They have created an attitude of irresponsibility toward the tragic history of Europe and a spirit of cynicism in estimating the consequences of the war.

The pacifists and the Socialists are one in believing that nothing is at stake in the present European struggle. The Socialists take this position because they measure the evils of a capitalist society against the ideal possibilities of a socialist commonwealth of nations. The pacifists measure them against an ideal world in which there will be neither coercion nor resistance. The Communists and the national patriots make confusion worse confounded by insisting that these ideal possibilities have actually been realized in some nations. The Communists are cer-

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tain that Russia cannot be imperialistic or prompted by nationalist motives; they believe that only capitalist nations can be imperialistic. This conclusion might give pause to the Socialists, who also believe that only capitalist nations are, or can be, imperialistic but who condemn Russia. Stalin may have corrupted the universalist ideal of socialism more than necessary; but history is bound to insinuate partial loyalties into universal ideals. The national patriots differ from the Communists only in their belief that it is America rather than Russia which is free of the egotism and imperialism they condemn in other nations. In either its communist or its American form the belief that one is free of the vices one sees in others is a comforting faith and betrays a self-righteousness as old as history.

Pacifism is usually the creed of only a small minority in any nation. It has achieved more than minority proportions in contemporary America largely because our churches are almost unanimous in their espousal of it. They have been driven to this position by their uneasy conscience over their hysteria in the last war. They have not been spiritually and morally profound enough to see that abstaining from all judgment between the contending forces is not the only possible alternative to proclaiming a "holy war." Pacifism is all the more popular in the churches because it is unconsciously mixed with the national fear of being involved in the war. In their anxiety to prove that they have purged themselves of the uncritical hysteria to which they yielded in the last war, the churches are inclined to identify religious perfectionism with the morally dubious impulses of an irresponsible nationalism. Religious perfectionism in ascetic terms probably has a greater validity than modern men realize. It may be a wholesome protest against all political relativities. But when a religious and moral absolute such as "perfect love" is introduced into politics as an alternative to the contest of power which is the very nature of politics, it breeds confusion. One form that this confusion takes is the disinclination of the pacifists to look at the horrible consequences of tyranny lest they be shaken in their conviction that nothing can possibly be worse than war.

The Socialists are inclined to cynical detachment from this war because they are secure in their conviction that war is the inevitable consequence of the capitalist economy. The genuine differences between Nazi tyranny and the cultural and social virtues of what is still left of civilization in Europe are thus obscured. It is of course important to be extremely critical of the motives and actions of the oligarchs who control modern democratic society. It is also well to remember that Hitler could not imperil all of Europe today if it were not for the treason of those oligarchs to the cause of democracy yesterday. It is also important to strive for a new organization of our economic life so that the capitalistic decay undermining the whole of Western civilization will not aggravate the anarchy of nations.

But it is hardly realistic to assume that a "new" society will automatically be free of national egotisms and rivalries, or even that the problem of preventing the "rulers" of a new society from becoming traitors to the essential interests of their commonwealths is permanently solved. Utopianism is always a source of confusion in dealing with immediate issues, because it accentuates the evils encountered by comparing them with perfections which history does not know and probably will never know. Many contemporary utopians, for instance, believe that a long-drawn-out war issuing in a stalemate would be a good thing because it would produce a general breakdown, in which the British tories and French reactionaries would be swept out before a socialist revolution. It is of course more probable that such a breakdown would bring, not socialism, but the totalitarianism from which Germany now suffers. If recent history has taught us anything it is that social organisms do not entertain the prospect of a breakdown, from which a new society is to emerge, with equanimity. Rather they seek to ward it off by reconstructions of their disintegrated economy under dictatorships. History ought therefore to have discounted social catastrophism as a political philosophy. Yet we find radicals who were once rigorous "social democrats" turning to catastrophism.

When utopian illusions are dispelled and one is not so certain what lies on the other side of social breakdown, either in terms of ideal possibilities or actual historical alternatives, one does not lightly hope for the breakdown of any social system in which there is still a degree of freedom and the possibility of achieving better social and economic adjustments. One hopes for such a breakdown only when any alternative is preferable to the existing tyranny.

The Communists, who still have a remarkably large following among intellectuals, add to the confusion of socialist utopianism by clinging to the absurd belief that utopia is in some measure a reality in Russia. This forces them to condone in Russian politics imperialist and nationalist motives which they profess to abhor in the capitalist nations, and to measure every political development by its effect upon Russian success. Thus they unite with the pacifists in deprecating American sympathy for Finland.

In this welter of conflicting dogmas it may be difficult to remember what ought not to be forgotten: that the anarchy of Western civilization has produced a particularly virulent form of tyranny in Europe; that this tyranny has destroyed every authentic form of culture in Germany and threatens every liberty in Europe; that the destruction of this tyranny, while only a negative condition of new health, is nevertheless a very important one. The fall of the Nazis will not of course of itself create a

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new Germany or a new Europe. The Allies, if victorious, will be tempted to take the French army's simple expedient for guaranteeing France against further German aggression. Whether another vindictive and abortive peace shall be made or whether Europe can lift the whole problem of security to a new level of international interdependence, is the paramount issue before Western society. A vindictive peace would mean that this war would be merely a milestone in the tragic course of European civilization toward ultimate disintegration.

Undoubtedly this issue will be fought out in the democratic nations on class lines, and the labor forces will have to make the largest contributions to a creative peace. But forces of sanity transcending class lines are engaged in the struggle. We may have reached a point in history in which the fear of alternatives too terrible to face will drive the usually stupid nations to seek security on a new level of creativeness. The fear of death, we are told, is an element in the travails of birth and furnishes some of the energy which makes birth possible. It is at any rate highly irresponsible to take a purely cynical attitude toward the possibilities of a decent peace. "If hopes are dupes, fears may be liars." Such an attitude is particularly blameworthy here because assumption of a responsible relation to this problem by America may well become a decisive factor in the peace.

However speculative the outcome of this tragic struggle may be, the attitude of cynicism, prompted by a disappointed idealism, is morally intolerable. But that is a lesson which our present generation of college students has yet to learn. They are now pretty generally engaged in proving that since all war news is propaganda they are absolved of the responsibility of seeking for the truth amid conflicting claims. In this they merely reflect the prevailing mood of their elders. America has contrived to brew self-righteousness, cynicism, idealism, and a fear psychosis into a pretty horrible mixture.

Everybody's Business

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

The Attack on the SEC

A HEAVY press attack on the SEC has developed as a result of its decision in the Consumers' Power case. Several of the biggest columnar guns have been brought to bear on it, and both the timing of their salvos and the nature of the high explosive employed suggest a common fire control and ammunition dump well camouflaged in the rear. The purpose of this bombardment appears to be to intimidate the SEC into reversing itself on the Consumers' Power issue.

One threat, developed by Frank R. Kent, is of a Congressional investigation, but there seems little likelihood of this being instituted at the present session, and probably Jerome Frank and his colleagues can treat this shell as a dud. More dangerous, perhaps, is the attempt of David Lawrence, among others, to outflank the SEC. Three of its five members, writes Mr. Lawrence, "must, in effect, confess by a reversal of their previous action that they allowed political motives and witch-hunting to be responsible for their refusal to approve a bond issue by Wendell Willkie's company, or else, by sticking to their guns, tie up new financing and new construction in 75 per cent of the utility industry, on which America has been depending for much help toward economic recovery in 1940."

What is it that the SEC has done to bring on this furious offensive? In the course of its duties under the Public Utilities Act it had to pass on a proposal by the Consumers' Power Company of Michigan, a subsidiary of Willkie's Commonwealth and Southern, to issue bonds totaling $28,594,000. Of this amount $10,000,000 was intended to finance new construction, while the remainder was required for the refunding of existing bonds carrying a higher rate of interest. The commission, by a majority, decided to approve that part of the bond issue that represented refinancing but refused to sanction the raising of new money in this form on the ground that the result would be to aggravate the already top-heavy capital structure of Consumers' Power. The common stock and surplus of the company, it pointed out, amounted to only 19.5 per cent of the total capitalization. In the case of the Detroit Edison Company and the Duquesne Light Company, comparable operating utilities, the ratios are 52.3 and 46.7 per cent, respectively, while a comparison made of the percentage of depreciated property applicable to common stock would be still more unfavorable to Consumers'.

Press critics of the SEC have seized on the fact that it has approved several recent utility bond issues which have been for companies with still lower ratios of common stock and surplus to total capitalization. But in each instance quoted these issues were purely for refunding purposes and therefore did not result in a lower ratio, as an increase in the loan capital of Consumers' would have done. This is a point most commentators found it convenient to overlook; nor did they mention the fact that while Consumers' is in a financial position to raise new money by the sale of common stock, these other companies are not.

Mr. Willkie has stated that a public sale of common stock of Consumers' Power is "impracticable," but he has not said why. Perhaps if he appeals to the SEC to reconsider its decision, as he still can do, he will explain his choice of this particular adjective. On the known facts it would seem that what he actually meant was that a common-stock issue would be extremely inconvenient for Commonwealth and Southern, which at present owns all Consumers' Power common and wants to maintain that position. In connection with the recent financing, it took up an additional 125,000 shares at a cost of $3,531,250, or $28.25 per share, which is the book value of the existing stock. This is a highly profitable investment, as is shown by the following statement of earnings available for common (on the basis of the stock outstanding on September 30, 1939) and dividends:

Calendar Year	*Earnings per Share*	*Dividends*
1936	$2.85	$1.60
1937	3.34	2.25
1938	3.31	2.00

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Results for the first nine months of 1939 suggest that the full year will be at least as profitable.

With a showing like this there should be little difficulty in arranging equity financing for the purpose of supplying the funds needed for new construction. Back in December, when the case first came before the SEC, Otis and Company of Cleveland offered to underwrite the proposed 125,000 new shares "at a price substantially in excess of $28.25," and there can be no doubt, judging by market prices for the stocks of similar sound operating utilities, that a much larger issue could very readily be sold. Any investment banker would jump at the chance.

But Commonwealth and Southern, presumably, does not want to let the public in to dilute its valuable equity in Consumers' Power. Unfortunately, it could hardly subscribe $10,000,000 itself, for although its cash resources exceed this sum, thanks to the sale of its Tennessee interests to TVA, it has other subsidiaries to take care of. And it cannot raise new cash itself because, with arrears on its preferred stock amounting to $15,000,000, its credit standing is far inferior to that of Consumers' Power. It is possible that, faced by this dilemma, Mr. Willkie will have a change of heart and discover that an issue of Consumers' common stock to the public is not impracticable after all. But at the moment he seems to be taking the position that unless new financing can be arranged on the terms most profitable to Commonwealth and Southern, he will drop it altogether and blame the SEC for the cut in the Consumers' Power construction budget which will then become necessary. It is rather surprising that such a dog-in-the-manger attitude should be receiving so much support from journalistic guardians of the public interest.

The whole story throws a great deal of light on the utility situation and suggests strongly that the real barrier to increased capital investment in this very rapidly expanding field is not government regulation or high taxes but the obstructions placed by holding companies between operating utilities and the investing public. For years Mr. Willkie and the other holding-company bosses have been hammering on the theme that the root cause of the inability of utility corporations to raise new capital, particularly in equity form, was the New Deal's attacks on the industry. The truth is that a majority of the holding companies, whose stock for the most part never represented anything more substantial than the capitalized dizzy hopes of the boom era, are in such shape that nothing but a drastic use of the wringer could ever make them credit worthy. A great many of the operating companies, on the other hand, are in perfectly sound condition and always have been. It would be possible to quote many examples of such companies that paid substantial dividends on their common stocks all through the depression. The fact that these stocks can be bought on the market at comparatively low prices is a tribute to the bearish effect of Willkie's unjustifiable jeremiads rather than the result of any actual harm done them by New Deal agencies. But, no doubt, this situation suits the holding companies and their Wall Street controllers. So long as they are not in a position to provide new capital for the industry themselves, they prefer to put a damper on its provision from any other quarter. After all, if the result is to check new construction and thus hinder recovery, the press will always help to throw the blame on "that man."

In the Wind

JAY ALLEN, who has been lecturing extensively throughout the country, reports that audiences are uniformly "propaganda-conscious," and bitterly hostile to phrases reminiscent of the last war. "In the Midwest," Allen says, "you get the feeling that people are standing in the back of the hall with shotguns—waiting to shoot the first lecturer who mentions Belgian babies."

DEAN JAMES M. LANDIS of the Harvard Law School, whose decision saved Harry Bridges from deportation, is quietly trying to "deport" an American girl—with her consent. Engaged to an Englishman who will be in the trenches in two months, she wants to spend the intervening time with him, but the State Department has refused her a visa on the ground that her mission "isn't important." To State Department friends Landis has been pleading: "It's the most important thing in the world."

DIPLOMATIC NOTE: "A nobleman close to the entourage of exiled King Alfonso of Spain said tonight that rumors circulating abroad that Alfonso might soon return to Spain upon invitation of General Franco were 'absolutely untrue and above all premature.' "—United Press dispatch from Rome.

HEADLINE IN the Lowell (Massachusetts) *Sun:* "Officials Seek to Modernize Relief Department; Will Ask for Funds to Buy Addressograph Machine." . . . On Forty-eighth Street in New York there's a theater marquee reading: "She Gave Him All She Had, Every Day Including Sundays."

FRENCH "WAR-DEFENSE" regulations are causing a good many headaches for book publishers. Among the works that have been banned is Jack London's "Iron Heel," presumably because the French edition has an introduction by Paul Vaillant-Coutourier, who was a Communist.

IN THE SAME mail last week city editors got two releases from the publicity firm of Selvage and Smith. One was a story about Herbert Hoover's Finnish Relief Fund. The other was a plug for the Republican National Committee. . . . Heywood Broun's friends are collaborating on a book in his memory. . . . J. B. Matthews isn't talking to newspapermen these days. . . . Frank Gannett says: "I'll bet if I were President for six months we would have prosperity back."

HALF A DOZEN newspapers have launched a new stunt to boost their advertising appeal. The idea, originating in the Indianapolis *Star,* is to print "scented ads." The *Star* printed an ad for perfume in "perfumed ink"; it increased the ad's effectiveness, helped the paper's circulation, and pleased everyone except the printers. They complained that their wives were demanding to know where they had been all day.

[*We invite our readers to submit material for In the Wind —either clippings with source and date or stories that can be clearly authenticated. A prize of $5 will be awarded each month for the best item.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

What Good Are Battleships?

IT IS good news, indeed, that there is a revolt on in Congress, that Senator Pat Harrison on the Democratic side and a strong group of the Republican minority have demanded the inquiry into army and navy budget demands so long urged in this column. With the New York *Times* also now favoring an inquiry, it begins to look as if something might be accomplished before long. I earnestly hope that if an investigation comes it will devote itself promptly to the question of battleships. The Navy Department has already announced that it wants two more. If these are granted, there will be ten of these monsters building. The seventh and eighth are already on the way and are to cost the Treasury no less than $90,000,000 apiece. The Navy Department, it appears, is now responding to pressure from the navy maniacs in the House and Senate and is actually considing increasing the size of these last two; it is to report also whether numbers nine and ten should not be of 80,000 tons—*35,000 tons larger than any battleship now building in the world*. The maniacs say that they want America to have not only incomparably the greatest fleet but ships of so great a size—costing probably $150,000,000 apiece—that no country will dare to attack us.

When the news was printed that some Congressmen were urging 80,000-ton ships, a cablegram from London stated that British authorities were utterly nonplussed by the report and could not understand why the United States wanted to build bigger ships when the whole trend in Europe was for smaller vessels. That this should be the prevailing opinion in England is hardly surprising. The British battleships have been nothing but a liability since this war began. One has been destroyed and another seriously damaged, and the others have been chiefly in hiding, precisely as they were during most of the last war. The only useful purpose they have served, so far as I can discover, has been to convoy Canadian troops from Canada to Great Britain. This has been done by "the main battle fleet," according to Winston Churchill. I have not seen this astounding fact commented upon in this country, yet there it is: the main battle fleet has been doing the convoy work ordinarily assigned to destroyers and light cruisers. This speaks for itself.

I should particularly like to hear the comment of those experts on both sides of the Atlantic who have been saying that even if the main fleet never moved out of Scapa Flow it was still performing a very useful service in that it was giving England control of the seas. Apparently that control was not so important that the main battleship fleet could not be taken away from England for a period of at least four weeks, during which time it was certainly not available to check any raids of Germany's remaining battleships and battle cruisers. The truth is that ever since the Royal Oak was sunk, the battleships have been hiding in various places, notably the Shetland Islands, which is one reason why German bombers have so frequently been visiting those islands. The fleet was rushed out of Scapa Flow when the Royal Oak went down for fear that the German U-boat was resting on the bottom. The Flow was dragged again and again by trawlers to see if the U-boat was still there, although it had come in on the surface with its searchlight going and had gone out on the surface after its successful attack.

An 80,000-ton battleship is such a monstrosity that it is hard to see how any intelligent man could urge it. There are very few harbors which such a ship could enter. It could not pass through the present Panama Canal, and the new locks would have to be widened to let it through. With the German pocket battleships being used, though with little success, as commerce destroyers, the time is certainly more than ripe for a careful inquiry into what purpose battleships serve anyway. Is their chief value to convoy troops and act as commerce raiders—work done successfully by the little Alabama during our Civil War and the light cruiser Emden during the World War? If we must have more ships, should we not build fast, heavily armored cruisers? It must not be forgotten that Admiral Sims, commander of our fleet in European waters during the last war, declared publicly that the only thing to do with our American battleships in the next war would be to send them up the Mississippi River and keep them there. If he were alive he would be the first to protest against 80,000-ton battleships. Why not 90,000- or 100,000-ton ships, if it is really true that the existence of two such leviathans would act as a complete deterrent to any naval attack upon us?

Finally this war is still young and we are not in any danger. It would be impossible to put an 80,000-ton ship in service under seven or eight years, and by that time either this war will be nearly forgotten or the whole world will be in ruins. To appropriate the sums the President is asking for will be to yield to hysteria and to act without intelligence.

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BOOKS and the ARTS

Notes by the Way

AMERICA is not Europe. No cold pogroms, no bombed civilians, no fascist terror. But wait. From the middle of 1935 to May, 1939, 300,000 refugees, nine-tenths of them native white Americans, entered California in cars, carrying all their belongings, their native tall talk, and their homespun ideas: independence—"We ain't no paupers. We don't want relief"; hope—"But what we do want is a chanst to make an honest living like what we was raised"; pride—"I've wrote back that we're well and such as that, but I never have wrote that we live in a tent." In California they don't get much relief; they are shunted from one jurisdiction to another because they are residents of nowhere. They are social outcasts. They find that the promised land is controlled by a few large owners. When they get work it's for wages that wouldn't keep a chicken alive, and when they resist to the point of organizing they are subjected to a police terror under the auspices of the Associated Farmers that feels just like fascist terror to the man who gets hit over the head.

The forced migration of thousands of people from Germany or the evacuation of children from London receives far more attention from the American press than the forced migration of thousands of men, women, and children from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, to California, Oregon, Washington, or wherever hope leads. Yet these American refugees are a serious and continuing threat to the way of life of all other Americans. What is needed is a first-class crusade that will not end until the migratory slaves are free to settle, with guaranties of economic security and self-respect.

We have had several excellent books dramatizing the great migration, including "The Grapes of Wrath," which is, by the way, still selling as fast as ever. "An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion," by Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor (Reynal and Hitchcock, $2.75), is the latest and one of the best of the books devoted to the dispossessed farm worker. Miss Lange is on the photographic staff of the Farm Security Administration. Mr. Taylor is professor of economics at Stanford University and one of the best-informed men in the country on agriculture and its migratory workers.

With camera and typewriter Miss Lange and Mr. Taylor have covered all the territories—the Old South, the machine plantations to the west, the Plains, and the Dust Bowl—from which thousands of families have been swept toward the Far West, like so much top soil, by the ravages of nature, the encroachment of technology, and the desire of owners to substitute day laborers for tenants in order to avoid sharing AAA checks. Both the text and the many photographs of "An American Exodus" are excellent; together they provide a vivid story in brief space of the nature and extent of the disaster, and of the measures, so far very inadequate, with which it has been met.

The last chapter is headed Directions, which are badly needed. The authors point out among other things that as yet we do not even know the magnitude of the problem, and that reminds us that we do not know either with any accuracy the extent of our industrial unemployment. This would seem to be a primary task. We do know that the country requires fewer farmers rather than more and that about 21 per cent of our gainfully employed are in agriculture but received less than 9 per cent of the national income in 1938.

The authors reject the small subsistence farm as a solution; the advance of the machine, they think, should not and probably cannot be halted. They advocate associations of tenants and small farmers for joint purchase of machinery, large-scale corporate farms under competent management with the working farmers for stockholders, and cooperative farms. (I should advocate as well strong unions to improve present conditions and press for genuine solutions.) Finally, they emphasize that the agricultural problem cannot be isolated. "Industrial expansion alone," they write, "offers hope of permanently raising agricultural income to high levels and of employing at good standards the population produced but unneeded on the farms."

This is a large order, but it is the order of the day. The authors do not provide a blueprint. They do make the human and the economic dilemma clear. They also issue a warning. The European war "may appear to some like a life preserver thrown to the displaced. But the acceleration of agriculture will be felt most in those very forms which now are displacing and limiting the opportunities of our people. . . . The false prosperity of war is no solution to the problems we describe. It is more likely to aggravate them."

One of the more striking photographs in the book shows three families with fourteen children camping beside a huge billboard which advertises a fast luxury train. "Travel while you sleep." While we sleep the migratory worker continues to travel an endless road. Unless his dismal trek is brought to a close by a real solution, we shall wake up some fine day to discover a fascist fire, not three thousand miles away, but in our own back yard. It is already smoldering in California.

MARGARET MARSHALL

Fiction Between Two Worlds

THE NOVEL AND THE MODERN WORLD. By David Daiches. University of Chicago Press. $2.50.

IN THIS study of the relation of modern fiction to the state of modern civilization, David Daiches is obviously indebted to Marxism for a good deal of his insight into his subject. His theory is that the most serious and significant part of twentieth-century writing represents an "attempted adjustment" of literary artists to the peculiar and arduous conditions of a transition period between the decay of one code of values and beliefs and the establishment of another. He examines the work of Joyce, Conrad, Galsworthy, Huxley, Katherine Mansfield, and Virginia Woolf in order to discover individual variations of this effort at "adjustment" and to estimate their success or lack of success on this score. In

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addition, the book includes three essays in which the main theme and some of its tributaries are explored along more general lines.

According to this view the contemporary writer is the denizen of an ideological no man's land. Thus removed from the norms of security, he is driven toward unceasing experimentation not only on the plane of form but also on the plane of meaning. Single-handed he must grapple with values, symbols, and moral formulas—precisely those elements of literature which in the past were provided by a stable and unified society. Hence technique is forced to solve problems which heretofore were outside its sphere. It has to devise ways and means of making private truths publicly credible, of rendering recognizable and convincing—"as a world apart, unjudged, unimportant, except for the importance the artist can give it by his method of presenting it—a shifting, neutral, arbitrary subject matter with no necessary or dependable emotions attached to it."

Mr. Daiches has made the experimental synonymous with the modern, and the modern with private standards of truth and a personal valuation of reality. In itself this approach is not new, for both revolutionary and traditionalist critics have used it extensively in order to explain as well as combat the chaos of belief that prevails in literature. Mr. Daiches, however, has applied this mode of analysis in a vivid and concrete manner. To confirm his principal concept he resorts neither to philosophical speculations nor to political moralizing; unlike some of his Marxist colleagues he is not addicted to manipulating, for the sake of immediate tactical advantage, such volatile, promiscuous, and easily reversible categories as "progress" and "reaction"; on the contrary, he confronts us throughout with specific and verifiable evidence drawn from actual works of art. In most cases he is able to establish an efficient correlation between the mutations of technique and the mutations of experience and consciousness. The result is that he clearly demonstrates that all experiments, no matter how formal they may seem, are at bottom experiments with nothing less than life itself.

But one dilemma implicit in his method—the confusion of the aesthetic value of the art-object with its social and historical origins—this critic has not escaped. For example, despite all the care and caution of his formulations, it nevertheless appears that "Ulysses" somehow falls short of achieving first rank as a work of fiction. Why? Because in a social sense it can be described as negative, indifferent; because its criteria of selection and significance have been not collectively but individually determined. As a social characterization this may be correct, yet in itself it does not constitute a test of the novel's literary merit. In fact, this confusion of genesis and value pushes Mr. Daiches into flagrant contradictions in his judgment of "Ulysses." On the one hand we are told that it is subtle and brilliant, "one of the great novels of civilization," and on the other that, stemming from a "defeatist desire to retreat from the contemporary situation," it represents a "flat, static, craftsman's world . . . not our world at all, nor anybody's world, but an artist's misunderstanding." Facing in two directions at once, this judgment of "Ulysses" is plainly unsatisfactory. Surely Mr. Daiches, if he wishes to be consistent, must either accept the full consequences of the utilitarian theory of art or else reject it altogether.

Since Marxists have been unable to prove that modern literature is inferior to the literature of the past, it seems to me they are not justified in condemning the spirit of individualism that animates it. Whatever our social needs may be, it cannot be denied that it is largely the strategy of individualism which has enabled the artist to survive in an environment inimical to his purposes. And though it is true that an art of "private truths" does not make for cultural integration, still it is utopian to expect the art of the present to incorporate a set of "public truths"—such as Marxism presumably offers—that so far have not been realized in the very structure of society.

PHILIP RAHV

The Old Southern Story

THE SOUTH TO POSTERITY: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WRITING OF CONFEDERATE HISTORY. By Douglas Southall Freeman. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

IN THIS brief book, which pretends to be no more than a series of essays about the records which Southerners, and a few others, made in memory or justification of their cause, Dr. Freeman has added such grace to his scholarship that what might be the dreariest bibliography is instead one of the clearest and most moving descriptions of the very human Confederacy which we possess. It is, of course, a Confederacy which did not begin in 1861 or end with Appomattox. Most of the material Dr. Freeman describes deals with such tangible things as time and battles, but the essence of the writings he discusses was such stuff as filled the hearts and preoccupied the minds of Southern generations. Such a book goes far to explain the continuing fascination that still in America attends the old Southern story which came to its climax in the fields of Virginia but grew in glamour steadily after defeat.

It was a strange literature which so compelled American thinking, North as well as South I think, to romantic attachment to the cause of the South. There are no great writers in the company of the record makers Dr. Freeman has assembled here. Indeed, in those days which both preceded and followed war the best American writers were understood to be living in the North and shaping their sentences to conform with Northern views. In the South in Dr. Freeman's listing there were soldiers and politicians writing as soldiers and politicians generally do, no better and no worse; there were solemn and sometimes rhetorical apologists; there were slim volumes of memoirs; there were letters; there was the stenographic report of an old lady in Birmingham testifying before an investigating Congressional committee. The huge, honest, unadorned Official Records kept the military story clear and straight. But somehow out of the mass of writing which was not in its component parts generally distinguished the emotional victory grew for the South, while the G. A. R. and the Republican politicians ruled the land. They were the Yankees who bought and loved "Gone with the Wind."

Dr. Freeman makes that process understandable here. From pages and volumes, many of which must make dull reading, he has drawn the human essence of that appealing Confederacy at war—a story of brave men and bad, simple and homesick and good, of women and generals and backwoods-

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men. The constitutional questions of secession, the moral questions of slavery are almost lost from memory in drama in which man attained dignity even in defeat. The war itself becomes less a war over a dispute than war in symbol for all times and all people, colored with glory certainly, but also, as Dr. Freeman points out, with sickening tragedy: "The hunger of Vicksburg and the terror of the Bloody Angle . . . the waning, three-day cry of Federals between the lines at Second Cold Harbor—'Water! For God's sake, water!' "

For any Confederates who may remain, Dr. Freeman has set forth in warmth and wisdom the details of their records. But he has done more than that. He has described the records to show that the Confederacy and its struggle for independence, or in rebellion (such terms are equally irrelevent now), is not merely a part of the history of the South but a stirring item in the dramatic history of man himself, of the veritable American. Far beyond passion, the Southern cause is now a part of poetry in which the homesick South Carolina boy, the impeccable Lee, the Richmond girls, even the mangled bodies in the Bloody Lane at Sharpsburg are as much the past of us all as Lincoln is. What the South has brought to posterity, as Dr. Freeman shows, is a past sad and angry, argumentative and dramatic, humorous too, and loving, and in the sum good and grand. It justifies the pride of Vermont as much as that of Virginia. The book could not be so American if it were not so Southern. JONATHAN DANIELS

The Science of Power

ACCENT ON POWER: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MACHIAVELLI. By Valeriu Marcu. Translated by Richard Winston. Farrar and Rinehart. $3.

DICTATORSHIPS are born when one established order is perishing and its successor is not yet ready to claim the legacy. When opposing social and political forces keep each other in check and neither is strong enough to vanquish the other, then a dictatorship steps in to submit both to its iron rule. Dictatorships mark the end of one period and the beginning of a new era. An old world declines and a new one is about to be born.

When Niccolo Machiavelli was appointed secretary to the Second Chancery of the "Ten of Liberty" in Florence, on July 15, 1498, he was given an unusual opportunity for observing the coming and going of despots in an age of transition. The European state system was breaking down in the struggle between the Catholic world and the new centralized empires in the West. Shifting trade routes were destroying the supremacy of the Mediterranean. New social forces, the burghers and peasants, were pressing forward, and the feudal rulers were in retreat. Power was destroyed and established almost overnight. Niccolo Machiavelli, himself powerless but close to the seat of power in Tuscany, set out to write what was to be the first modern essay of a science and philosophy of power.

As long as power seemed established forever, rooted in God, there was no reason to analyze how power was won or lost. It needed a crisis such as the one at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, shaking almost the whole of the known world, to induce men to examine what the rulers preferred them to believe an eternal, God-sent institution. In a period of constant change Niccolo Machiavelli believed that he could serve his ideal prince by describing the mechanism by which power is won, retained, or lost. Nevertheless, Machiavelli performed a revolutionary deed. To explain power in secular terms, to make it understandable to human intelligence, was a serious threat to a ruler in an age of absolutism.

Valeriu Marcu's book tells little about Machiavelli's writings. It is true that a long series of studies on this subject is now at our disposal. But the author gives us something else which adds greatly to our understanding of Machiavelli, namely, the historical and social background of his work. The struggle of the Medici, who won control over Tuscany at the expense of the two rival forces of the nobility and the *populani,* with the city business men and the guilds represents the typical three-cornered fight out of which dictatorships emerge. The Medici in Florence, the Borgias in Rome, the king in France were the rulers whose example inspired the little city clerk in Florence. From them he learned the art of winning and retaining power, of intriguing and betraying in the service of power, and he was the first to understand, from their example, that the main purpose of politics was success. He who was himself unsuccessful throughout his life, sitting in the anterooms of the powerful, pestered by petty money worries, came to establish one single yardstick of politics—success—and one end of politics—personal power.

But the little secretary who did all the work without obtaining more than passing recognition, who was an efficient though unpretentious diplomat, proved utterly helpless when he lost his job by a change in Tuscany's political situation. He pinned his hopes on his friends, whiling away his time writing books, waiting for another opportunity of working in the shadow of power. Fate, however, was against him. Moderate success came to him not in politics, where alone he appreciated and desired it, but through his comedy "Mandragola," which he wrote as a pastime.

Machiavelli knew power from the point of view of the ruler and from that of the masses. Perhaps the best part of Mr. Marcu's book is that in which he shows how Machiavelli spent his private life among the rabble of the city. He did not realize, as perhaps the author does not, that a new social force was emerging out of the depth of the city and the miserable huts of the countryside, and that Savonarola's iron rule was a forerunner of social struggles far more important for the history of the world than the conflicts between the despots of his age. Yet Machiavelli understood that the support of the common people alone could give the ruler lasting power. The common man, as Machiavelli saw him, could not yet aspire to rule himself, but he could bring about the rise and decline of the power of the great.

Almost every great man in history is judged by Machiavelli's yardstick of personal success. However, what Machiavelli had in mind was but one type of despotism, that for which personal power is the goal. He did not and could not think of rulers who sincerely aspire to power not for its own sake but in the service of an ideal. Napoleon III is a classic example of a modern dictator of Machiavelli's type, as Karl Marx has shown in his famous study. So are Hitler and Mussolini, and perhaps Stalin, to judge by most interpretations of his

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new foreign policy. To measure a man like Lenin, however, in the same terms would be completely misleading, for Lenin did not wish power for himself but for his idea, and he measured his own success not by the power he personally wielded but by the advance of the philosophy and of the party to which he devoted his life.

Machiavelli himself was more than a cold admirer of power. Throughout his life he dreamed of the unity of Italy, but he failed to see that the common people alone could make his dream come true. He believed that by brutal force and skilful and lying propaganda the masses could be coerced eternally into serving their masters' ends. Yet by advocating a citizens' militia he served the coming democratic movement, though he failed to understand the significance of what he was doing.

All politics are means to ends which power alone can realize, but the pursuit of power for power's sake is merely the symptom of a social crisis bound to decline when a new equilibrium supersedes the precarious balance of forces upon which dictatorships are built. Long as they may appear to contemporaries, dictatorships are episodes in the evolution toward a self-government of free men. And Machiavelli taught the technique of dictators to their enemies.

ADOLF STURMTHAL

Recent Fiction

ASK THE DUST. By John Fante. Stackpole Sons. $2.

YOUNG ARTURO BANDINI, a passionately confident young writer who resembles the legend of William Saroyan, is the hero and narrator of this, Mr. Fante's second novel. Living in a cheap California hotel and mailing stories to Eastern editors, following up the scripts with purely personal letters of thirty or forty pages which the editors sometimes buy and print as stories, he vacillates between ecstasy and degradation, exultant with the beat of warm Italian blood in his veins yet keenly self-critical, eyeing his own antics with the detached amusement of an outsider. Almost morbidly determined to immolate himself, he details his infatuation with a Mexican waitress who despises him because he sublimates his desire and is a Great Lover only on paper. There is a lot of lush sentimentality in the book, but also a glowing fervor of youthful intensity that lights up all but one or two banal episodes, such as Arturo's vicarious comforting by a middle-aged nymphomaniac. Even his final gesture of farewell, throwing a copy of his novel into the desert in which Camilla has disappeared, escapes utter melodrama because it is made up of that same mixture of laughing and crying that flavors the whole story. Together with the author's first novel, "Wait Until Spring, Bandini," the present book may well form a part of a larger series, a "Young Manhood of Arturo Bandini." Unless I miss my guess, Mr. Fante intends to give us further adventures of his ingenuous, impulsive hero, who may very possibly be Mr. Fante himself.

ACROSS THE DARK RIVER. By Peter Mendelssohn. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

Whatever the Nazis may have done and may still do to civilization, they have supplied fiction writers with a fund of ready-made plots for thrillers. "Across the Dark River," the author of which is himself a refugee, tells the sufferings of a group of Austrian Jews who after the Anschluss are shorn of all their belongings and marooned on a sand bar between Austria and Czechoslovakia, later shunted back and forth by jittery Czech and Hungarian governments, and finally given temporary refuge aboard a vermin-ridden French barge in the Danube until the survivors of disease, exposure, and rifle bullets are rescued by an international refugee organization. The two central figures, who do most to sustain the morale of the pitiful little band as calamity after calamity threatens to annihilate them, are Baron von Roth (crime: one Jewish grandmother) and Jakob Weiss, a cobbler, who in spite of his Semitic name, is relatively "Aryan" but has a sense of decency and fair play that naturally clashes with storm-trooper ideals. Although every incident in this saga of persecution could probably be documented with newspaper reports, the plot moves so rapidly from episode to episode that it reads more like an adventure story than like a novel of protest. Perhaps, after all, the best we may hope for the future is that in days to come readers will turn away from stories like "Across the Dark River" and "Mr. Emmanuel" with a smile of disbelief, classifying us as a generation whose tastes in fiction ran to the bizarre and fantastic.

TO THE END OF THE WORLD. By Helen C. White. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

An ambitious, many-faceted chronicle of the French Revolution, without any of the usual clichés of that breed. Its central figure is a young priest, of aristocratic family but ascetic temperament, who, just as he is about to enter the ancient monastery of Cluny, is caught up in the whirlwind of the Terror and enlists his whole strength in the heroic underground struggle to keep the church alive in France during the years of anti-clerical fanaticism. There must have been many priests like him who, not by intrigue but by unselfish devotion to their parochial duties in the face of persecution, endeared themselves to the simple peasants, to whom the Worship of Reason was never anything but a name.

LOUIS B. SALOMON

FILMS

THE film "Mice and Men" (United Artists) is apt to reopen in the movie columns the critical discussion of John Steinbeck's stunt story—so painstakingly has Lewis Milestone, producer and director, followed the original. There are small changes: Lennie is less stupid in the picture, and Curly's wife has a bit more soul, but otherwise the plot and the lines are the same. Hollywood for once displays deep respect for a serious writer. Can it be that "Mice and Men" was from the beginning a Hollywood story?

It is as a rule no virtue for the movie version of a novel or play to keep too close to the letter of the original. The film, as a different medium of expression, has its own laws. These are necessarily violated by mere photographic reproduction, however perfect it may be. Steinbeck's story touched upon an important theme at those few points where the

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account of the clinical case left space: the loneliness of the farmhands and their longing for a piece of land of their own. Of course, one could not expect Hollywood to accentuate social themes. But on second thought I am not able to praise its shrewd capitalization of the sensationalism of the original.

On the indicated level a marvelous job of production, direction, and acting has been done. That one is never really captivated by the Lennie of Lon Chaney, Jr., is not the actor's fault, and it would be a gross injustice to call him the weakest of the lot. He is as good as if not better than Burgess Meredith as George, but no enduring interest can be held by the repetitious, unchangeable stupidity of the character he has to play. A broken leg or an undeveloped brain as such is not dramatic, and few people will persuade themselves into the suggested intellectual detour at the end of which, allegedly, Lennie stands as the symbol of a mysterious, childlike folk-soul. They will rather take their money's worth in sentimental or melodramatic sequences and a few beautiful shots of wide farm land. They will get, besides—and in this respect the picture represents respectable progress—some realistic scenes of ranch life, which is usually romanticized. There is an unforgettable dinner sequence in which the girl (Betty Field) can no longer bear to watch or listen to her husband and father-in-law as they eat. The epigrammatic realism of this scene moved me more than the overplayed sequence in the bunk house where one farm hand after the other displays his good heart while waiting for the shooting of the dog. What is missing here is missing throughout the picture—sharpness and complete truthfulness. But I need not criticize John Steinbeck's story again.

"His Girl Friday" (Columbia) "from a play by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur" is a remake of "The Front Page," the movie success of 1931 and stage hit of 1928. The original has been changed this time into one of those fast-moving and idyllic comedies in which the lovers behave like villains to each other—sophisticated is the usual word for the genre. Hildy Johnson has become a woman for this purpose. She has been married to the fanatical editor and divorced from him because there was never time for love. Coming to tell him that she is going to marry a simple insurance man from Albany, she soon finds herself, against her will, back on her former job as reporter. There follows the plot of "The Front Page," with the managing editor playing his tricks partly on the insurance man. By the change the accent is shifted to the lovers' quarrel, and the original story loses much of its sense and punch. Yet Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant give such entertaining performances that nobody in the roaring audience seems to notice the tastelessness, to say the least, of playing hide-and-seek with a man condemned to death. The tragic elements of the original story are misused for boy-meets-girl nonsense. Charles Leder has written the new version with great skill and Howard Hawks has directed it with liveliness but with too great a concern for the deaf.

FRANZ HOELLERING

In an Early Issue

"Church and State," by Don Luigi Sturzo

Reviewed by G. A. BORGESE

DRAMA

Lucid Interval

DURING the last few weeks I have spent a good deal of time wondering what a play by James Thurber would turn out to be. Obviously it could hardly contain either of his most frequently employed symbols, since his dogs do not exist, and his women—who unfortunately do—would not be allowed to reveal themselves on the stage with that completeness which contributes so greatly to their lack of charm. It seemed to me that if he actually did succeed in creating a dramatic equivalent of his familiar pictures and text, the result would be like Strindberg only different. It would have the grotesque logic of a bad dream, but it would also be funny in some very upsetting way.

The actuality recently revealed on the stage of the Cort Theater turns out to be a hilarious farce pretty certainly destined to great and well-deserved success but by no means so nearly *sui generis* as one was inclined to anticipate. Mr. Thurber's collaborator and featured performer, Elliott Nugent, appears to have been an important contributor, and "The Male Animal" is revealed as approximately one-fourth recognizable Thurberian madness and one-fourth mild social protest. The remainder is skilful domestic farce of a thoroughly American kind and not wholly unlike the vehicles which the Nugent family used to provide for itself in the twenties. The central character, a mild young professor in a Middle Western college who raises a storm in a teacup when he proposes to read Vanzetti's farewell letter to his class in English composition and then, in the midst of it all, has to endure the presence of his wife's old football-playing sweetheart, is unmistakably related to all Mr. Thurber's thoroughly bedeviled males. For that matter this hero's comic rebellion and not over-successful determination to behave with a primitive virility hardly native to his character also suggest one of Mr. Thurber's favorite themes. But the fact remains that the treatment is fantastic in a traditionally farcical way rather than in the more disturbingly insane fashion one has come to expect in his other work.

The incident of the teacup and the incident of the door knob, to speak cryptically, are probably his and are not wholly uncharacteristic. So too, one imagines, was the bit about the wife who was necessary to her husband because she alone could fix the ribbon in his typewriter, though the elimination of this bit by Mr. Nugent was, according to Mr. Thurber's published account of his agonies, the beginning of their collaboration. But even such incidents as these would represent for Mr. Thurber relatively lucid intervals and do not wholly obviate the impression that, delightfully funny though the play is, it is not quite what one expected. Mr. Thurber's Strindbergian quality has been described by innumerable adjectives ranging from the homely "goofy" to the portentous "dissociated," but perhaps the most general statement of the difference between the atmosphere of this farce and the atmosphere which he usually generates would be achieved by saying that while the world of his text and pictures is a private world, the world of "The Male Animal"

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is a public one. The wife, the husband, and the ex-football player are immediately rather than remotely recognizable and so are the predicaments in which they find themselves. The symbols are equally familiar instead of being, like those which Mr. Thurber commonly employs, part of a private mythology of his own invention. But it would be less than fair not to repeat that "The Male Animal" provides a highly entertaining evening and that the performances of Mr. Nugent as the professor and of Leon Ames as the football player are especially good. JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

MUSIC

TO ITS existing set of Verdi's "Otello" (M-152: 16 records, $24), made a few years ago by singers, chorus, and orchestra of the Milan Scala, Victor has now added a set (M-620: 6 records, $12) made by leading singers, chorus, and orchestra of the Metropolitan. The older set offers the entire work, the new one only a few of the best-known arias and ensemble numbers; and the older one offers the work much better sung and more agreeably recorded than the excerpts of the new one. The constricted, threadbare sound of Martinelli's voice these days is in sharpest contrast with Nicolo Fusati's youthful warmth; and while Jepson's and Tibbett's voices are fine, hers does not have the loveliness of Maria Carbone's, and his lacks the weight and darkness and richness of Apollo Granforte's. Nor do the two Americans achieve the style in which Carbone and Granforte sing this Italian music; and Tibbett's American pronunciation of Italian is hard to listen to. And the new set, finally, offers the excessive sharpness of some present-day recording.

Record companies, an executive remarked to me recently, are in business not to produce art but to make money; and in the record business, as in the toothpaste business, money is made not on the quality of a product but on its name. I don't mean that the quality is necessarily poor: a celebrated artist is sometimes celebrated because he is a great artist. But in this Metropolitan "Otello" set, certainly, Victor is selling an undistinguished product on the strength of a distinguished name—which is exactly what the Metropolitan itself is doing. In the performance of "Otello" that I attended, Tibbett—whose boyish face peeping out at one through make-up and false whiskers, and whose gestures right out of dramatic school have provided a good share of the things that have made me laugh at the Metropolitan—contributed a comically villainous Iago that I might have ascribed to the stage director's malice if I had not known it was to be ascribed to his helplessness. Most revealing was what happened in the very first scene, in which Tibbett, with nothing to sing or do, should have kept himself rigorously within the stage picture contrived by the director, but in which instead he destroyed illusion by presenting the distracting figure of an important star waiting for his part to begin, bored meanwhile by the action around him, and drawing attention away from it, now by fussing with his cloak, his sword, his stance, now by conversing with another singer, now by turning to look the audience over—his power to destroy the scene's effect in this way evidently greater than the director's power to stop him.

Ah, yes, the star system, you will say. Yes and no. It depends on what is done with the stars, on whether they are used for the operas, or the operas for them—whether, that is, a manager decides to produce "Otello," assigns roles in the production to his outstanding singers, and gives to conductor and stage director the authority to make the best use of the singers' capacities and limitations; or whether, casting about for roles in which to exploit a singer's box-office appeal, the manager lets a Tibbett have his fling at Iago.

On the other hand consider the revival of "Orfeo" last year. The prestige of the Metropolitan's name is based on historic performances in which the great stars of the past were subjected to the authority of great conductors—the 1909 performances of "Orfeo," for example, in which Homer, Gluck, and Gadski sang under Toscanini. This prestige was attached last year to a production that had Thorborg's superb performance as Orfeo, but that suffered from scandalously inferior singers in the other roles, and from Bodanzky's heavy-handed conducting. There may not be as great singers today as in 1909, or as many of them; but I am not sure the Metropolitan has all it could have; and I know that from those it had last year it could have put together a more respectable cast for "Orfeo." Nor are there Toscaninis to be picked from trees; but "Orfeo" might have been conducted by Reiner, who has been drifting around doing odd jobs like the brilliant Philadelphia Orchestra "Falstaff" and "Figaro" and "Meistersinger" while Bodanzky was producing those driven, tight performances at the Metropolitan, and who will go on conducting an orchestra in Pittsburgh while the entire German repertory at the Metropolitan is handled by a young conductor of phenomenal technical equipment who has yet to acquire depth and breadth as a musician.

But as a matter of fact the Metropolitan has had one of the greatest singers of all time, Kirsten Flagstad, whose voice today shows the effect of its misuse through managers' conscienceless greed and her own recklessness—five years not only of incessant Brünnhildes and Sieglindes and Isoldes but of Brünnhildes, Sieglindes, and Isoldes four times in seven days, three times in three consecutive days—whereas Caruso never sang more than twice a week. The loveliness, the incredible freshness of the voice when it was first heard here were due to the fact that it had never been taxed in this way—for one thing that Flagstad had sung very little Wagner and a great deal of Italian opera. And with its performances of Verdi positively disreputable and Mozart out of the repertory altogether for lack of singers, the Metropolitan, looking about desperately for new roles for Flagstad, could think of nothing better to do than to put on "The Flying Dutchman" so that she could sing Senta. However, even that is better than putting on "Louise" for Grace Moore.

Two good Handel records from Victor are E. Power Biggs's of the Organ Concerto No. 2, played with the Fiedler Sinfonietta (15751, $2), and Webster Booth's of "Comfort Ye, My People" and "Every Valley Shall Be Exalted," sung with the London Philharmonic (12598, $1.50). And Paul Robeson sings the Russian folksong, "Night," in English and Russian very well, but introduces Negroid syncopations into the Lermontoff-Gambs "Lullaby" on the reverse side (26409, 75 cents). B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

What Does France Want?

Dear Sirs: I have just finished reading the first piece of Nazi propaganda which has ever caught my eye in *The Nation*. I refer to Robert Dell's The Menace of a Great Germany, in the December 23 issue.

No more effective argument is available to Hitler, both for German consumption and for world consumption, than that "French imperialism," having learned nothing and forgotten nothing, wants to repeat, in still more drastic form, the crimes of Versailles. What Dell advocates in effect, is to chop Europe up into a series of statelets, each about as big as a tennis court, though he pays lip service to the idea of one big federation for Europe economically. It would be interesting to watch him hang himself in trying to unravel the crazy crisscross of provincial interests, each seeking protection against the other, which such a return to stark eighteenth-century madness must necessarily involve. It may or may not be true, as the *Iron Age* recently reported, that the French are now trying, via Belgium, to barter their surplus iron ore for German surplus coal. But true or premature, the fact remains that no stable Europe is possible until all the ingredients of economic life are scrambled in the same frying pan.

If a victorious France splinters Germany again and holds it down for another generation, a still more voracious German nationalism will feed on the unworkable injustices of such a *Dictat* until it is strong enough to create still another pre-war situation followed by a third World War. If France really means to go for the map of Europe like a hobo reaching for a dish of free lunch, that of course is its business, just as it is undeniably Mr. Dell's privilege to let cats out of heretofore well-guarded bags. But Americans will perhaps be pardoned if they temper the platonic idealism with which they have been expected to regard the war and simply shrug their shoulders, as France prepares to set the clock back.

Little wonder that honest enemies of Hitlerism are just as well satisfied that the Allies are reluctant to state their war aims. More to the point, little wonder that the British embassy in Washington, which is more practical in these matters, has for some weeks been conversationally warning its American friends not to mind any overexcited French talk about the next partition of Germany. ELIOT JANEWAY

New York, January 11

Robert Dell's Solution

Dear Sirs: Eliot Janeway's extreme indignation at one of the proposals in my article appears to have prevented him from reading it very carefully. If he will look at it again he will find that I did not propose "to chop Europe up into a series of statelets." Germany is not Europe. Nor did I "pay lip service" to the idea of European economic federation. I said that a European customs union was essential and that, without it, Europe would perish. Nor did I propose that a victorious France should "splinter Germany again and hold it down for another generation." What, by the way does "again" mean?

Mr. Janeway apparently thinks that the break-up of Germany into its constituent parts would intensify German nationalism. I am convinced, on the contrary, that it is the only way of getting rid of it, for I do not accept the thesis that it is due to the Treaty of Versailles. I have given some reasons in my article for not accepting it, and I could have given them in more detail, had space permitted. My arguments in favor of my various theses may or may not be valid, but they need to be refuted. I regret that Mr. Janeway did not attempt to refute at least some of them.

I am convinced, as I said in my article—Mr. Janeway seems to have forgotten it—that political federation, the United States of Europe, is the only solution of the European problem. We must get rid of national sovereignty and suppress political and economic frontiers. Frontiers should be cultural. This solution would make it impossible for any country to dominate or hold down another and would make the existence of even very small countries possible. The Swiss Confederation has four million inhabitants speaking four different languages and contains more than twenty cantons, some of them extremely small, but the system works admirably and there is no "crisscross of provincial interests, each seeking protection against the other." European federation might ultimately increase the number of cultural frontiers, but what if it does?

What Mr. Janeway reports about the private conversations of the British Embassy in Washington is interesting, if it is accurate. It does not surprise me. Whatever Lord Lothian may be saying now, he started the pro-Nazi movement in England by his articles in the London *Times* on January 31 and February 1, 1935, and he is one of the men most responsible for the "policy of appeasement" to which we owe the present war. ROBERT DELL

New York, January 15

The Streit Plan

Dear Sirs: Oswald Garrison Villard refers, in your issue of December 23, to "Clarence Streit's plan for the federalization of Europe." Clarence Streit has no such plan. In his "Union Now" Streit proposes a federation of the world's existing democracies, with the addition of other states as soon as they are prepared to guarantee to their nationals the civil liberties and rights which are enjoyed by citizens in a democracy. Streit explicitly rejects the idea of a European federation both because of the impracticability of uniting democracies with totalitarian states and dictatorships and because of the difficulty of determining where "Europe" ends. England as the center of the British Commonwealth of Nations carries Europe westerly to Alaska; the U. S. S. R. reaches eastward to the same territory. Robert Dell, in your same issue, clearly differentiates between Streit's idea and a federation of Europe—which he prefers. W. EDWIN COLLIER

Philadelphia, January 12

The Real Catholic Press

Dear Sirs: There is no doubt that Mr. Southworth intended to make an accurate presentation of the facts about the Catholic press in his December 16 article, He did not succeed because he is not a Catholic and therefore, while he can cite figures and quote excerpts, cannot evaluate influences. For instance, it is true as he says that the diocesan papers have an enormous circulation, but—and this is what Mr. Southworth could hardly know—they make almost no impression on Catholics because so few read them. Catholics buy their diocesan

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paper but do not even intend to read it, just as they contribute to the Catholic university and do not intend to send their sons there.

Catholic magazines, however, are bought to be read and are read. *Social Justice* is far and away the most influential Catholic magazine. And it is Catholic; it is useless for the authorities to disown it since we all know that it could not be published if Father Coughlin's immediate superior or the authorities in Rome decided that it should not be published. And this is the problem which keeps Catholics of good-will awake nights. Why do not the bishops of the United States ask for an investigation of *Social Justice* by the proper authorities in Rome, an investigation similar to the one which led to the condemnation of *Action Française?* That rabble-rousing journal was put on the Index, and its editors, management, and supporters were excommunicated because it "used the church for the political ends of the group while pretending to serve the church." A more exact parallel would be difficult to find. Of course it was another Pope who condemned *Action Française.* Pius XII has restored it to favor after accepting retractions differing hardly at all from those which Pius XI had considered inadequate guaranties of good behavior.

Mr. Southworth is correct in his estimation of that suave Jesuit journal *America* as the most important magazine of reaction on the "approved" list. But he fails to emphasize the growth in recent years, in numbers and influence, of magazines of opposite tendencies. The *Catholic Worker,* only a few years old, has a circulation of 150,000 and is growing steadily. The *Queen's Work* and *Christian Social Action* have large and increasing circulations. And this is true of less well-known pro-democratic publications such as *Our Lady of Perpetual Help,* the *Michelman,* and a great many others.

Few are less inclined than I am to minimize anti-democratic tendencies in the church, and no one is more puzzled or dismayed at the failure of our clerical authorities to control the un-Catholic activities of Catholic priests in our press and in other less open ways. But that does not blind me to the fact that there are quiet voices in our press speaking the language of strict Catholic morality and offering here as in France a growing hope of change and reform. The non-Catholic who fails to give due weight to the best we have to offer not only presents an incomplete picture; he also misses a chance to encourage a movement which may be as important to this country as it will certainly be to the church. RUTH O'KEEFE

Lynn, Mass., December 9

Mr. Hall Sums Up

Dear Sirs: Mr. Southworth insists that the Catholic Press Association—which, with some publicity, celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1936—was founded in 1890; he cites an article which plainly deals with a "progenitor" of the C. P. A. He does give us a chortle by describing that grand old historian Tom Meehan as a priest. Whereas I said wealthy laymen controlling Catholic papers are "a rarity," he cites one, then is stopped. He says *Social Justice* until January 9, 1939, printed ecclesiastical "permission to publish"; if he will look again, he will find no reference at all to such permission.

As for the hoped-for bill of particulars—well, for whatever reason, none is given. There are several admonitions to me to read various propaganda pamphlets. For the rest, Mr. Southworth pleads "reasons of space" kept him from trying to substantiate his unsupported charges. To my citation of William Philip Simms and Hugh Gibson, Mr. Southworth merely says of these distinguished and objective eyewitness commentators that they don't know what they are talking about. Well, let us send it now to the jury of *Nation* readers, even though it is regrettable they must judge with no evidence even yet submitted. FRANK A. HALL,

Director, N. C. W. C. News Service

New York, January 9

Mr. Southworth, Ditto

Dear Sirs: That "grand old historian" Thomas F. Meehan—I should not have called him "Father" but I trust I did him no harm—writes that on the first Wednesday of May, 1890, Catholic press representatives met in Cincinnati "and then and there the Catholic Press Association of America was founded." There is not the slightest indication that the article deals with a "progenitor" of the C. P. A. *Social Justice* until the issue of January 9, 1939, carried on its editorial page Father Coughlin's name and under it "by permission of his superior." These are verbal quibbles.

I mentioned the books I did because, since they were published in Franco Spain, they should be acceptable evidence to Mr. Hall, but the N. C. W. C. News Service insists on being now as during the war more pro-Franco than Franco himself. The books were possibly "propaganda pamphlets," but they were written as pro-Franco propaganda and published under an official censorship powerful enough to ban the Pastoral Letter written last August by the Spanish Primate. (Both the Pastoral and its banning, facts demonstrating the shallowness of the Catholic victory in Spain, have been ignored by the Catholic press in the United States.)

Let me say in conclusion that Mr. Hall correctly interprets my opinion of the testimony given on the Spanish struggle by his "distinguished and objective eyewitness commentators."

H. RUTLEDGE SOUTHWORTH

New York, January 12

CONTRIBUTORS

KENNETH G. CRAWFORD, Washington correspondent of the New York *Post* and *The Nation,* has just been elected president of the American Newspaper Guild to succeed the late Heywood Broun.

FRITZ STERNBERG, a German economist now living in the United States, is the author of "From Nazi Sources: Germany's War Chances."

REINHOLD NIEBUHR, professor of applied Christianity at the Union Theological Seminary, delivered the Gifford lectures at the University of Edinburgh last summer.

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